COUNT CAGLIOSTRO:

OR,

THE CHARLATAN.

A TALE OF

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

If Cleveland's ruling passion were termed a love of popularity, the word would hardly express the full extent of the principle which naturally predominated in his breast. His was not the cold ambition of the scholar or the statesman, to shine or rule. The bare admira-

tion of his fellow-creatures would never have contented him. He wished to engage their attachment—to attract their sympathies—to be the centre of many affections—to create for himself a new and happier existence in the bosom of all around; and to find in their hearts a responsive echo to every tone of thought or feeling which vibrated in his own. Vain hope! Desperate alchemy! it were easier to transmute the dull ingot of lead into its own weight of pure and refined gold, than to coin the sordid mass of selfishness, which calls itself the world, into true and sterling friends. Yet Cleveland, like the adepts of old, was happy in his golden dreams, while he continued the impossible pursuit. But he pressed on in his career with too much eagerness; and the cold, disenchanting touch of poverty, dissipated his visions. In the bitterness of his disappoint-

ment, he swore never to renew them; and whenever they again began to rise, in distant but tempting prospect, he sternly and contemptuously turned away.

And this is the result of the much-lauded wisdom of experience—a thousand times more fatal to our happiness than all the errors of continued folly. To seek exemption from care and sorrow in insensibility, is as unwise as to cut off the hands to prevent the fingers from being pricked.

When Cleveland endeavoured to steel his heart from all impressions, whether of joy or pain, and to live in the world as if he were an unconcerned spectator of its doings, and not a deeply interested actor, he should have remembered Rochefoucault's profound observation,—"That people endued with strong passions, are happy under their influence, and miserable

when cured of them." This is the reason why disappointment exercises so deadly an influence over the mind. It is not that the acquisition of the toys which we aimed at, could have exerted much effect on our happiness, but the failure to obtain them chills us from the prosecution of that pursuit, where content and mental health were unconsciously found. To lose the baubles themselves is nothing—but to lose the spirit and inclination to renew the chase, is indeed misery.

Cleveland began to lose his relish for existence. He had so long accustomed himself to check every feeling of expectation or hope, that at length the sentiment ceased to arise in his mind. He no longer looked on the future with the eyes of other men. He beheld in it no bright vistas of coming happiness — no charming back-ground of content and repose.

He saw in it nothing but a continuation of the dull and insipid realities of the present. The word to-morrow had no magic for his ears. To him it was nothing but a monotonous repetition of to-day—a tedious counterpart of the past hours, which had already disgusted him. And cut off from the hopes of to morrow, who is satisfied with to-day? None—not even the happiest of men. To-morrow! Beautiful word of hope—sweet sound of promise—ever renewing dawn of an anticipated career of happiness, 'tis thou, and thou only, that reconcilest us to existence!

An invincible lassitude took possession of Cleveland's mind. All his faculties seemed involved in torpor. The ordinary routine of amusements in which he had hitherto mingled, was now gradually abandoned. He shrunk from pleasure as a fatigue. He shunned society.

Conversation became odious, and seemed only to increase the disgust and weariness with which every object seemed to inspire him. His heavy hours were passed in fits of gloomy abstraction, or sullen reverie. At night, his mind, restless and irritable from the want of wholesome excitement during the day, was unable to enjoy the customary repose of slumber. In vain did he stretch himself on his feverish couch, with a desperate determination to sleep. In vain did he endeavour, by every artificial expedient, to win his uneasy spirit under the influence of "nature's sweet restorer." Hour after hour did the dull melancholy chimes of some neighbouring church sound upon his wakeful ear, and tell him how slowly the tedious night was wearing away. It is not surprising, that the reflections which suggested themselves during these involuntary vigils should be of the gloomiest cast. Solitude is a

fearful thing to thoughtful minds. By solitude is not meant the mere absence of human beings. The solitude of the library, the laboratory, and the studio, is peopled by the most delightful of all companions—ideas of knowledge, of power, and beauty, which throng upon us thicker than the motes that sparkle in the sunbeam. By solitude is meant, that state of loneliness, in which, from some cause or other, we are compelled to look within our own bosoms, and reflect. In society, there is an artificial stimulus, arising, perhaps, from the close contact of mind to mind. A mob, no matter of what class it is composed, is always excitable. The gaiety and petulance of one encourages and inflames the others. Our spirits act and are reacted upon by each other, until they are wound up to a pitch of exhilaration and excitement, which they cannot for an instant maintain when alone.

The combined joyousness of all is discharged, like the electric spark, through each. We are inspired—we gracefully jest away our heaviest cares, and moralize over our worst misfortunes, with scornful and philosophic mirth.

Without effort or fatigue, all our energies are arrayed, and on the alert. Every faculty spontaneously exerts itself to dazzle and delight. The overflowing fulness of our hearts is vented in a thousand obliging speeches. We scatter compliments on every side; we flatter all around, and are repaid with an abundant shower of adulation; until cheered, elated, and encouraged by the delicious commerce, we almost persuade ourselves that we really are what we appear, and what others believe us, to be.

It is in the hour of darkness and solitude that the demon of unquiet thoughts arises, and,

overshadowing our souls with his gloomy pinions, whispers despair. It was such a fiend as this that brooded over Cleveland's mind during the interval of his broken repose. A still small voice, which he could neither shut out nor silence, seemed ever muttering in his ear, taunting his joylessness, and tempting him to die. "You *must* hear me," it seemed to say, "for I am your own reason. You may drown my warnings for a time, in the clamour of noisy gaiety; but, sooner or later, their realization will sting you into attention. It is in vain that you stifle my voice to night with other thoughts; at some period or other it must be heard. Will you listen in preference to your hopes? Have they not always deceived you? If they raised you for a moment, was it not for the purpose of plunging you into an abyss of disappointment? Did not my fore-

bodings on each occasion prove true? Will you trust them again? No—you must be disabused by this time.

"Stripping off, then, the false colours with which hope adorned the scene, let us examine the prospect which lies before you. How do you pass your life?—In a dull round of petty duties and of insipid pleasures. Do you derive content or even satisfaction from their performance? If so, why are not your eyelids now sealed in balmy slumber? What will the future be? A dull re-enactment of the present. Nay, scarcely so—for the colours will be faded—every trace of gilding worn off—and the last poor remains of pristine novelty and brightness completely effaced. The first draughts of life's cup have sickened and disgusted you. You nauseate even the comparatively clear liquor which sparkles at the top; and yet with insane perse-

verance you still drain the bowl, and hope to find happiness in the dregs. Would you live your past life over again? You shudder at the idea. Then why live out the remainder, which in all probability will resemble the commencement? Why should you think that the weakness and infirmity of old age will succeed in attaining what the strength, activity, and energy of youth failed to grasp. Apply the common doctrine of chances to the matter. For eight-and-twenty years you have played at a certain hazardous game called life, with varied, but on the average, bad success. The amount of painful sensations dealt out to you has far exceeded those that were pleasurable. The black days assigned to you have been more in number than the white. What is the fair inference which, on the ordinary principles of calculation, you would draw from such experience? Nothing

less than this, that life is a losing game. And is it rational to expect that the nature of the speculation will be changed, and the proportion of good and evil reversed, because you still persist in continuing your stake? Is the motive which induces you to persevere the dictate of reason or common sense? or is it the blind instinct of hope—an unreasonable confidence in your own good fortune—an infatuated persuasion of coming luck, similar to that which urges the gamester to risk his last shilling on the hazard of the die?

Which way will you escape the weariness of life? You will choose some object of pursuit—good. Ay, and a noble one—better still. You will dedicate yourself to the benefit of mankind—glorious idea! You are prepared no doubt for the brutal ingratitude of those whom you attempt to serve. You are prepared also for the sneers and opposi-

tions of those who feel and resent your generosity, as a tacit reproach on their own insensibility. But can you reconcile yourself to the idea, that all your exertions and sacrifices will not ultimately produce one iota of practical good to the race for whom you are labouring? You may fall a martyr in the attempt; but you will not advance the cause one inch. Look how little the wisest laws and institutions have been able to effect. The mountain of human misery remains undiminished. What can an individual do?—nothing—absolutely nothing. He might as well thrust his hand into a torrent, and fancy that he stopped the speed of the waters. Often your benevolence creates and multiplies the very evil it was intended to banish. Charity begets beggars. Give away your whole fortune to mendicants, and you will make a thousand paupers, besides yourself.

"Will you devote yourself to the acquisition of power, and make ambition your God? He is a stern and selfish deity—difficult to propitiate, capricious to reward, oftentimes giving to baseness and subserviency what he denied to talent and merit. Remember the serpent creeps higher than the lion can climb. A thousand different events must cooperate in your elevation. You must be born at fitting time, placed in the particular country which affords a favourable theatre to your talent. A spark falls in the desert and is extinguished; it lights on a forest and causes a conflagration. Had Cromwell been born fifty years sooner or later than he actually was, he would have lived obscurely, or perished ignominiously. If Turenne, Condé, Marlborough, or Eugène, had served their respective countries as privates instead of officers, how different would have been their career!

"But he who unites talent to perseverance will always distinguish himself. True—you will be famous then? Know that in the whole circle of human delusions there is no phantom so unreal and evanescent as glory. You consume your life in exertions compared with which the labour of a galley-slave is a jest—for what? To attain the admiration of the very beings, whose intellects you despise, and whose vices you detest. And were the approbation of these judges an adequate reward—you hear it not—see it not—feel it not. You may be celebrated at the antipodes, and posterity may build you monuments; but in your own immediate circle, among your own intimate associates, on whom the comfort of your existence depends, your superior talents will draw down upon you hatred, envy, and depreciation, as surely as your statues, if you have any, will cast shadows when

the sun shines. Further than all this, the intense and unceasing efforts requisite to attain eminence in any department of art or knowledge, beget an irritability of nerve, which renders its possessor the unhappiest of mankind. If you doubt the fact, read the biography of genius; and you will find that those records contain a complicated mass of calamity and suffering, not to be paralleled in the annals of criminals. Be warned by their example; expel from your heart that restless consuming madness called love of glory. Rather drink, game, or debauch:—nay, shrink not contemptuously at the mention of these pursuits: low and criminal as you may deem them, how many of the most gifted of our unhappy race have sought refuge in these vices from the weariness of life, and have preferred the indulgence of such gross passions to the prosecution of those high and

glorious schemes which their talents entitled them to form, and would have enabled them to accomplish.

"Lurks there no moral beneath this incomprehensible infatuation? Does not it seem, as if these powerful but erring spirits had not found the reward they expected in the dazzling paths that they first trod, and that in the bitterness of their despair they sought a coarse brute-like felicity from physical excitement?

"But what avail these reflections? They only serve to confirm the miserable truth, that existence is one long conflict with evils, that must at last overcome us. *Pain is the animating principle of the creation.* We are born in *pain.* We die in *pain.* From the cradle to the grave, *pain* is our constant companion, our primary impelling principle, our overruling and controuling governor. It dallies with us, as a wild

beast sports with its prey. For a moment we seemed to have escaped—to have eluded its power; but the least indiscretion, and its talons are again plunged into our side; until, at last, having tortured us for the allotted term of three score years and ten, it strikes the mercy-blow,* and we become a heap of carrion, that the nearest and dearest of our friends cannot survey without feeling their gorge rise. And knowing all this, and feeling much more, you still live!"

Such were the temptings that continually assailed Cleveland, as night after night he lay stretched upon the rack of his own uneasy thoughts. "I must be ill," said he; "some latent disease disturbs my repose; and my want of sleep renders me melancholy." With this view of his case, he went to the most

* The coup-de-grace.

famous physician in Paris. "Examine me well," said he, when introduced to the man of science; "and tell me whether my state of health be good." The physician looked at his tongue, felt his pulse, punched his chest, slapped his limbs, and made divers enquiries which were satisfactorily answered.

"You need not alarm yourself," he said to Cleveland, "if your frame does not glow with the brilliant health of a mountaineer; if your skin has not the clearness, nor your muscles the tone which belongs only to him who is taking constant exercise in a pure atmosphere; yet you have as much health as is, perhaps, compatible with a residence in a crowded metropolis, and an habitual participation in its enervating pleasures. What more do you expect or want?"

"I want good spirits and cheerfulness during the day, and quiet sleep at night."

"Then at present you have neither of those blessings?"

"I have not."

Again the physician renewed his inquiries concerning the patient's mode of life, diet, &c.; but he could elicit nothing which afforded a satisfactory explanation of his patient's symptoms.

"The disease must be in the mind; some recent misfortune still haunts your memory and troubles your imagination. If so, time and occupation are the only remedies I can suggest; but they are specifics of tried efficacy. And when you are quite recovered, you can amuse yourself like the lady in Voltaire's story, by erecting a monument 'à celui qui console.'"

"Your surmises are unfounded—for many years past my life has been, what the world would deem and call, a career of uniform prosperity."

"Then you must be labouring under hypochondria," said the physician.

"What is that?"

"A most strange, and insidious malady, often attacking those who are otherwise most favoured by nature and destiny; sapping the springs of enjoyment, and bringing upon its victims, even in the prime of their life, and the zenith of their fortune, all the hopelessness of old age, without its protecting insensibility."

Cleveland was surprised at the energy with which the physician uttered this description.

"You speak feelingly," said he.

"I have reason to do so," returned the physician, with a somewhat dismal expression, "since I have been struggling all my life against the complaint, and should long ago have fallen a victim to it, but for the constant occupation of mind and body, which my pro-

fession enforced. Often my friends wonder, why I persist in supporting the fatigues of an extensive practice, and do not rather retire to enjoy in repose the fruits of my success. But I am well aware, that it is only by excessive drudgery, that I can keep the fiend at arm's length. As it is; if I am left alone, and unemployed for half-an-hour, I am ready to hang myself."

"But if a patient declines your remedy of incessant drudgery, have you no other succedaneum?"

"The priest bids you have recourse to prayer—the philosopher exhorts you to exert your reason—I have sometimes tried, or fancied that I tried, the latter expedient. May *your* efforts be attended with better success than mine were."

Cleveland took his leave, but little consoled

by the interview. He saw the ludicrous improbability of obtaining assistance from the practitioners of medicine, when the most celebrated of their number avowed his inability to cure the disease in his own person. Indeed, the last remedy he suggested, was hardly worthy of his acknowledged skill and shrewdness. A propensity to speculate over nicely on subjects which are rather matters of feeling than of reason, is in itself a strong symptom of mental disease. The physicians say, that the healthy man is he, who does not feel that he has a stomach; and that a disposition to reason on the digestive process, and to study the rules of diet, is a certain sign of dyspepsia. The same principle holds good with reference to human felicity. The really happy man is he who enjoys life without reflections on its nature, object, or utility; while a tendency to philoso-

phize on existence, and to institute curious and inquisitive investigations on its various pains and pleasures, is a sure indication of a dissatisfied and troubled spirit. It is the restlessness of internal pain, that sends us prying into the dim and misty regions of metaphysical speculation; from whence we always return, like Byron's Cain, baffled in our high researches, but more than ever exasperated with the *actual* world.

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO NEGATIVES MAKE AN AFFIRMATIVE.

THE amusement for which Cleveland retained the greatest relish, was the Opera. The music seemed to inspire a wild and tender melancholy, a mingled sense of beauty and sadness, which was not without its peculiar charm; and was at all events preferable to the dull listless despondency, under which he ordinarily laboured. Unbidden tears would rush to his eyes during the performance of some beautiful passage. His stuffed bosom felt relieved; his heart grew

soft, and once more throbbed as it was wont in youth: the visions of earlier happier days, flitted palpably before his eyes. For a moment he was almost happy; but the strain ended, and all vanished. It may be questioned whether this momentary exhilaration was beneficial to Cleveland: for though it appeared to tranquillize and sooth his troubled spirit for a time, yet by increasing the morbid sensibility of his mind, it probably aggravated rather than palliated his disease.

The opera had finished, and Cleveland was again thrown upon himself. Whither should he direct his steps? He shrunk from the solitude of his own domicile; yet the irritation and tedium of company were still more unendurable. He traversed the deserted and dimly-lighted streets at a rapid pace, careless whither he was going, so that he could by the violence

of his physical exertions suppress the crowd of jarring thoughts within. At length, without having purposely directed his course that way, he found himself on the Pont Neuf. The sudden transition from the narrow lofty street, which allowed the passenger but a slender glimpse of heaven, to the free open space on the bridge, induced Cleveland to pause, and survey the scene around him. It was a beautiful summer's night. The lights on the Quais were mostly extinguished. A few, however, shot their trembling radiance on the smooth dark waters of the Seine, as they swept stealthily, and swiftly, under the bridge. The moonlight slept upon the huge mass of surrounding buildings, and gave them a solemn and unearthly character; an effect which was much enhanced by the striking solitude which now prevailed in a place which was usually so busy

and crowded. While, above all, spread the dark azure canopy of heaven, spangled with its glittering and innumerable lights. Despite his gloom, Cleveland felt the influence of the scene. A sense of beauty stirred his heart; but the emotions which followed were still sorrowful and despairing. Long and earnestly did he gaze on the starry concave. So intense was his contemplation, that at last his bewildered and overwrought spirit seemed almost to mingle with their placid rays, and to hold actual converse with the unconscious luminaries.

"Glorious and immortal host," he mentally ejaculated, "the least of whom is a universe, of which we can neither compass nor comprehend the minutest atom.—Mysterious orbs! of whom science tells us nothing, save that ye are vast and mighty.—Grand and unimaginable worlds! whose last faint rays, transmitted athwart yon-

der blue infinity, are still a wonder, and a delight to the dwellers on earth, and form the only spectacle on this dull globe, which never wearies the eye or heart of man.—Are ye places of suffering and torment for beings as frail and wretched as myself? or are ye, as I would fain think, the bright abodes of a pure and perfect race? Oh! that my soul had the wings of a dove, that it might fly away from this mansion of care, and settling on your silver shores, enjoy the peace of the blessed! Oh! that my troubled spirit, freed from its clayey prison, could traverse yon intervening space, and attain your havens of rest."

As these passionate aspirations passed through Cleveland's breast, he cast his eyes on the river beneath. A sudden, and overwhelming impulse urged him to plunge into the dark rapid current. His reason offered no resistance—in

fact it had long ago obscurely indicated such a step, as the only and natural termination of his wretchedness. A subtle but overpowering desire for peace, like the pleasing but irresistible sensation which impels us to sleep after long vigils, or violent fatigue, pervaded his heart and brain.

He was about to mount the balustrade of the bridge, when an approaching footstep broke upon his ear. He turned round. It was a female, apparently young, to judge by her step and figure; but her face was closely veiled. It was so unusual for the ladies, who walked the streets of Paris alone, and by moonlight, to conceal their faces from observation, that Cleveland's attention, absorbed as he was in his own feelings, was attracted by the circumstance. His curiosity, however, was not so much excited as to induce him to take any farther

notice. So, shrouding himself in a recess of the bridge, he quietly waited till the new comer should leave him in quiet possession of the ground. The female was equally regardless of Cleveland, and passed on to the other end of the bridge. There she stopped, and cast some furtive glances on either side, apparently with the view of ascertaining if any body was in sight. She seemed aware of the vicinity of Cleveland, and began to loiter about, as if she expected that he would depart, and leave her alone. This manœuvring continued for some time, each party seeming determined to outstay the other. At length a suspicion flashed across Cleveland's mind, that the stranger had sought that spot with intentions similar to his own, and only waited his disappearance to put her resolution into execution.

A strange impulse of curiosity urged him to

try if this surmise was well founded. With this view, he pretended to depart, and walked out of sight for a moment—then turning back, he rushed with the speed of lightning to the spot where the female had been standing.

His conjecture was right. She had already climbed on the balustrade; her arms were raised to Heaven in the attitude of prayer, as if imploring forgiveness for the act she was about to commit. Another moment, and she would have plunged; when Cleveland sprang up, and dragged her down. The shock was too much for her already excited nerves; and, uttering a faint scream, she fainted in his arms.

Perplexed as he was at his situation, and serious as was the occasion, Cleveland could not refrain from reflecting on the singular inconsistency of his conduct. A minute ago he

was on the point of committing suicide himself; and now he interfered, with the utmost eagerness, to prevent another from putting a similar intention into practice. So true is the maxim of Napoleon,—"Rien ne refroidit comme l'enthousiasme des autres." The moment we see our own madness exhibited by another, we are struck by its absurdity. In an instant he had lost all his taste for suicide; though he would not have confessed the fact even to himself.

"Ridiculous inconsistency!" muttered Cleveland to himself, as he supported the lifeless girl in his arms, hardly knowing what step to take next. "What right had I to prevent the poor girl from seeking a remedy I was about to administer to myself? It is in vain we reason and philosophize;—to the last moment of our existence we are the fools of custom and circum-

stance; and, in the hour of action or excitement, our grandmothers' dogmas supersede all the fine-spun deductions of reason."

The female's swoon was of very short duration. It did not last for half a minute; when, recovering her consciousness, she disengaged herself from Cleveland's arms, before he had time to lift her veil and examine her features. But even in this short interval, he had been able to remark the grace and symmetry of her rounded form.

"Thanks! thanks!" she exclaimed, in a faint voice. "I am well now;—pray leave me."

"Not till you have promised not to repeat your late attempt."

"I promise, then.—I give you my word I will not," said she, turning to retire.

"Yet stay," said Cleveland; "answer me

one question, and I will allow you to depart. What was the motive which urged you to self-destruction?"

"My particular griefs can hardly interest an entire stranger."

"More than you imagine. But I will set you an example of confidence. I came to this spot with pretty much the same intentions as yourself. Your presence suspended my purpose. Your attempt gave a new direction to my thoughts. A sudden and most inconsistent impulse, for which I cannot account, prompted me to arrest your design. And now I am possessed by an irresistible desire to know the circumstances by which you were induced to attempt suicide. I know not why, but I feel as if there were some strange connexion—some subtle and mysterious link between our fates. Besides, having forced you to endure life, I would now fain make life endurable."

The unknown shook her head mournfully. "I distrust," said she, "the generosity of your sex. Woe to the unprotected woman, who accepts an obligation from a man. Sooner or later an unworthy recompense is always demanded for the insidious gift."

"What! railing at our true—open—honest—constant—single-minded sex? Nay, then, I need ask no farther. The cause is clear. It is the old story of seduction, desertion, and despair."

"On the contrary, my tale is one of denial, pursuit, and persecution."

"And was a leap from yonder balustrade your only means of escape?"

"Such is my poverty, and such the malice and ingenuity of my foes, that every other outlet was—alas! is still—shut up."

"This purse," said Cleveland, producing

one, "will be of service to you. It contains, I believe, some large notes."

The unknown contemplated him for some moments, as if to read his motives.

"Are you serious," she at length said, "in bestowing such a gift upon an utter stranger, whom you may never probably meet again? Above all, do you offer it freely and unconditionally?"

"As freely as ever captive tendered his ransom. As for conditions, ere a week has flown, I shall most probably be—where I took the liberty to prevent your going—at the bottom of the Seine. Take it, and be happy. But, while labouring under the ills of poverty,—and I deny not that they are many and bitter,—still, thank God that you are exempt from evils which no accession of fortune, and no change of external circumstances, can remove or palliate."

"It is hard," rejoined the other, "that Monsieur Cleveland, who seems so anxious to mitigate the afflictions of others, should be so unhappy himself."

"Ha! you know me, then?"

"This evening is not the first time I have experienced that innate spirit of generosity, which was so little to be expected in a friend of the Duke de Fronsac."

With these words she removed her veil, and the pale light of the moon disclosed to Clevelond the unrivalled features of Antonia.

"Do I dream?" exclaimed he; "or do I behold Mademoiselle Antonia? By what strange vicissitude is De Fronsac's favourite, whom I last saw surrounded with ease and splendour, converted into a midnight wanderer, meditating suicide? My warnings then proved true?"

"They did: and permit me now to apologize

for the rudeness with which I treated you, when you so generously apprised me of my impending danger. But how could I believe, that the man, whom for years I had loved and venerated as a father, would suddenly assume the character of an unprincipled libertine? I will spare you the relation of his odious importunities and depraved arguments. You may conceive they did but increase my disgust. At last he changed his tone, and uttered the most fearful menaces. He execrated me as a low-born, ungrateful brat, whom his weak kindness had pampered into a rebel. Finally, he threatened to expel me from his roof, and leave me to starve."

"And he had the cruelty to execute this menace?"

"Such an act would have been comparatively honourable. But he did not intend to let me escape so easily. Finding all other

means ineffectual, he resorted to the most brutal and unmanly violence; when Heaven, in its mercy, sent the priest, who was in the habit of attending the inhabitants of the château, to my assistance. With a courage, which, under the circumstances, I can call nothing less than sublime, he interfered in my behalf; reproached the Duke with his villany, and escorted me out of the château. But here, alas! his power to assist me ended. He was afraid to let me remain on the Duke's domain; and, thinking that I might best elude my persecutor in the obscurity of a metropolis, he sent me to Paris. He gave me a letter of introduction to a woman, whom he described as poor, but honest; and who, he said, would, for a small remuneration, allow me to board in her house. Alas! she did not merit the priest's eulogium. For some time I supported myself with the produce of my pencil——"

"Good Heavens! Why did you not apply to me for assistance? Had you forgotten my address?"

"I cannot say I had," replied Antonia, slightly blushing; "but one of the insults which the Duke heaped upon me, was an insinuation, that my resistance to him was occasioned by a secret attachment to the guest whom I had only seen one day."

Cleveland, whose eyes during the narrative were fastened upon her beautiful and expressive countenance, felt his heart beat at the mere suggestion.

"I determined," resumed Antonia, "not to take a step which might lend a colour of truth to his suspicions. Besides, you might have proved a more dangerous protector than even the Duke—I did not dare to trust you—nay, I did not dare to trust myself. I therefore persevered in my labours; but the Duke discovered

my retreat, and the expedient by which I supported existence. His first care was to undersell me with all my employers. I could no longer find purchasers for a single drawing. He then corrupted my hostess. She offered to lend me money, which I imprudently accepted; and she now threatens, unless I seek the Duke's protection, to throw me into prison."

Cleveland heard her story without surprise, for he knew De Fronsac; neither did he waste any indignation on the Duke's conduct; for he knew a hundred others of his acquaintance, who, placed in a similar situation, would have acted in the same manner. Nevertheless, he felt a sentiment of interest in the fate of the unhappy girl, with whom he had thus strangely been brought in contact. Before they parted, he extorted from her a promise that she would meet him on the morrow. She consented.

Those, who have never felt the iron gripe of necessity, may condemn her conduct; but others, better acquainted with the world, will pronounce that, in certain crises, life offers but one alternative to the wretched—death by their own hands, or submission to circumstances. It is easy for a person, surrounded to satiety by all the comforts of life, to make the magnanimous declaration that they would sooner starve piecemeal than be guilty of such and such acts. Let them wait till they are tried. To execute such a resolve is as impossible as to refrain from crying out when torn to pieces by the rack. Yet though Antonia yielded, it was at least with apparent regret.

"I am afraid," said she, "I am about to place myself in the power of a protector even more dangerous than the Duke de Fronsac."

"In placing yourself in my power," replied

Cleveland, "you have in reality secured your safety. In the vulgar language of the world, you are indebted to me, and owe me some return; but, in reality, I am the party who has gained by this interview; since you have inspired me with an emotion of interest which has long been a stranger to my bosom. But at all events, possessing, as I hope I do, some few grains of generosity, I should as soon think of availing myself of the advantage of my superior physical strength, as of abusing the influence which accidental circumstances had conferred on me."

Antonia would have been charmed with the delicacy of this sentiment, even had it proceeded from the mouth of De Fronsac; but coming, as it did, from a man under thirty, and to whom she was already bound by the obligations of gratitude, it reached her heart.

Cleveland's first care was to hire some comfortable but retired lodgings. His next to engage an old woman, who usually officiated as his laundress, to enact the part of chaperon and duenna to Antonia. These arrangements were both completed before he met Antonia. The latter was soon installed in her new domicile, which it was agreed she should consider as her home, until circumstances should offer a plan more suitable to her age and sex. Cleveland respectfully and delicately requested permission to visit her; Antonia made but a faint opposition. She was young, unversed in the world's customs, and a stranger to the rules of etiquette. She threw herself wholly on Cleveland's honour, and trusted to his sense of propriety.

Cleveland became, as might have been expected, Antonia's daily visitor.

What a wonderful thing is love, especially in

its first conception. Here was a man who had lived from his youth upwards with the wise and the great, who had tried every pursuit, and exhausted every pleasure, and had found all stale, flat, and unprofitable. So deeply was he disgusted with every phase and modification of life; so utterly did he despair of attaining even a moderate degree of happiness in any, that he looked upon life as a burthen. He had endeavoured to get rid of it as a disease; and now, how and where was this fastidious, indifferent, sated poco-curante, spending his time, day after day? In a tame insipid conversation with a young and inexperienced girl,—a conversation inspired by no ulterior motive,—carried on for the mere purpose of amusing the passing moment,—maintained solely for the present pleasure which it afforded to both parties. Yes—the conversation was flat and insipid; or at

least would have been so to any third person but the old woman who had been hired to endure their tediousness. And yet both Antonia and Cleveland possessed great natural abilities; and one had seen much of life.

Their talk turned chiefly on themselves. Sometimes it consisted of idle plans for the future regulation of Antonia's life. One day it was settled she was to be a prima donna. Another time, she was to be a female Raphael. At another she was to be an abbess. Sometimes Cleveland would reveal glimpses of his past life, to which the other listened with the intensest interest. But oftener than anything else the conversation was occupied with developing their mutual feelings. They were never weary of unfolding to each other their most hidden emotions, and explaining the respective peculiarities of their dispositions. All these matters were

certainly light and trifling. Where then was the spell which bound him, who had turned away so contemptuously from the most dazzling of life's other enchantments! Where was the charm that fascinated him, whom nothing and nobody could please?

He analysed his feelings; and he found that in conversing with Antonia, one subject was just as delightful as another. He felt, that with her, he could have discussed the difference between the Homousians and the Homoiousians,* with the greatest interest and animation. Her presence alone was sufficient happiness to him. He wished for nothing more. To see her—to be in the same room with her—was enough. To listen to her when she spoke,—to

* See Gibbon on the mighty schism between these two sects; who, for the difference of a vowel, tore the Christian world to pieces.

gaze upon her when she was silent,—to watch her when she moved,—to contemplate her when motionless,—it mattered not which of these occupations employed him. Either, or any of them, made him happy—unboundedly happy—happy beyond what he had conceived to be the extreme limits of human enjoyment. He would not have exchanged five minutes of such placid delight, for all the noisy tumultuous pleasures that ever shook a palace. Sometimes they drove, accompanied by the *bonne*, a short distance from Paris, and took a country walk. The ruralities, in the vicinity of a metropolis, are seldom very attractive; but what signified their intrinsic merits? Her company hallowed even the vilest object that met his eye. Not a stick, not a stone, not a shrub, not a tree, not a stile, but it immediately became sacred in his sight, if he had seen it whilst enjoying her

society. Months afterwards, when he visited the place alone, the aspect of a rude rustic bench, on which she had once rested, shook him—the stoic Cleveland—even to tears. Good God! how mutable are our strongest feelings! A week ago, this man was on the point of seeking a muddy death at the bottom of the Seine,—and now he hoarded life as a miser would do his treasure.

Could they always have remained in this state, they had been happy. But sooner or later love inevitably becomes alloyed with passion; and passion tends to possession; and possession (such is the unhappy nature of our mortal frame) reacts injuriously upon our love, tarnishing the glory and destroying the divinity of our idol.

When Cleveland first took Antonia under his protection, he never for a moment harboured

any idea of making her either his mistress, or his wife. The pity, naturally excited by the spectacle of unparalleled beauty overwhelmed by unmerited distress, was the only motive that prompted his conduct. Melancholy, weariness, and disgust, had temporarily dried up the sources of desire and pleasure. Cleveland never suspected that any danger could arise from his intimacy with Antonia. His passions seemed dead—Alas! they were only asleep. The beauty of Antonia woke them to redoubled life. He was surprised, but not alarmed. He thought he could control his feelings. He might still, he thought, with safety, fill his eyes and heart with her loveliness. He might still listen to the music of her voice. With this he would be content. He would say to the rising spring-tide of passion;—thus far shalt thou go, and no farther. Canute's attempt to stay the

flowing waves with his royal chair, was not more ridiculous. We may avoid temptation, but we cannot subdue it. Once let the enemy get possession of the throbbing citadel—once let all sally-ports and outlets of the body be filled with a torrent of hot-bubbling blood; and, if you are under fifty, you may abandon all hopes of resistance. Most wisely are we taught to pray not to be led into temptation. We are not directed to supplicate for the power of overcoming temptation, because this is impossible without ceasing to be men.

But what opposition did he encounter from Antonia herself? What resistance did the fair girl make? None at all—not the least—not the slightest.—If Cleveland had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught, she had drunk much deeper. The slightest expression of his will, was to her as a law of her being. The least

indication of his wish was reverenced, like the fiat of a divinity. She had no suspicions—no distrust of his intentions. So deep was her confidence in his love, so boundless was her admiration of the whole man, that the idea of guilt or shame could not exist in her mind with that of his beloved image. Had he asked her to sacrifice her life—her happiness in this world—or her immortal soul in the next, she would have instantly consented. Had he pointed the instrument of death to her breast, she would not have turned away—she would have smiled in unutterable love. Death would have been sweet from his hands.

To love and to be loved in early youth, when soul meets soul; when heart answers to heart; when sense, sympathy, spirit, and feeling, are all condensed upon one dear object, who reflects them back! Trànscendant happiness! When

once tasted and enjoyed, we may thank God, and die; for all subsequent pleasures are flat and insipid.

Well—bitter as is the price we pay for this gratification,—heavy as is the penalty, which the hated laws of society inflict on the woman, who thus errs, Antonia did perhaps wisely, as well as lovingly, in snatching a few brief hours —in plucking a few sweet flowers, from the barren waste of existence, at all costs, at any hazard, and in defiance of the world's law. Ay—the hope of fame is sweet to the vain—power may seem a noble object to the proud—and the desire of the miser is insatiable. But in looking back upon all these pleasures, we feel that they were mere phantoms, which mocked the touch; there was nothing in them which satisfied the thirsty longings of the heart—nothing which quenched the feverish aspirations

of the soul. No—throughout the whole progress of this detested journey—this accursed pilgrimage called life, there is but one god-like joy, which any mind of sense and spirit would wish to repeat. It is—away with the paltry delicacy of shuffling phrases, and ambiguous expressions—it is the full, free, unrestrained, entire, and perfect, moral and physical possession of the being we love.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISIT FROM THE POLICE.

About six weeks after the Marchioness de Montolieu's interview with Cagliostro, the Count D'Ostalis was one morning informed by his valet, that two strangers, who had declined giving their names, were waiting in the saloon below to speak to him.

The Count, who had just achieved a most successful toilette, and was meditating in what particular sort of idleness he should employ the day, heard the announcement with visible vexation, and bid his valet tell the visitors that he

was engaged. The man hesitated, and stated that he had already assured the strangers that his master was busy; but that, nothing daunted at this information, they had peremptorily declared their determination to see him before they left the house. He further added, that he suspected the strangers to be some of the higher agents of the police. Uneasy at this latter intelligence, the Count instantly hurried to the saloon, where he found the strangers placidly awaiting his arrival. They rose with civility on his entrance, and saluted him.

have the honour," said the one who appeared to be the leader, "to serve his most Christian Majesty Louis the Sixteenth in the capacity of Sub-Lieutenant of the Police."

"The King is happy in possessing such a servant," said Count D'Ostalis, whose habit of complimenting was inveterate.

The officer bowed with an air of profound gratification. Count D'Ostalis returned the bow; and the officer seemed to feel the honour of being bowed to by a Count.

"Count D'Ostalis," resumed the Lieutenant, "it is an unpleasant duty to intrude on the leisure of so polite a nobleman as yourself; but I come on an errand of great importance. You are no doubt aware, that about two years ago, a certain adventurer, named Joseph Balsamo, but assuming among other appellations the title of Count Cagliostro, was implicated in the famous and atrocious affair of the necklace."

"The transaction was the talk of all Europe," observed the Count.

"Unhappily it was," continued the Lieutenant; "no doubt you are also aware, that though this crafty charlatan contrived to elude the justice of his country, and to obtain from the lawyers who tried him a verdict of acquittal,

his most Christian Majesty thought fit to banish him as a dangerous character from the realm of France, and to prohibit his return under the severest penalties."

"Such I have understood was his Majesty's pleasure," replied the Count.

"And yet, Count D'Ostalis, we have received private information that you have, within the last few months, not only seen, but even conversed with and visited, this supposed exile."

"The information was correct," replied the Count without hesitation. The Lieutenant and his follower exchanged looks of astonishment.

"Was it not the duty of a loyal man to have forwarded information to the police?"

"How could I tell," replied the Count, "that he was obnoxious to you? How did I know but that the King had permitted him to return? He did not seem to affect concealment."

"Can you remember," said the former, "the

day of the month on which your visit took place?"

"The beginning of June."

"This is incomprehensible," says the Lieutenant in an under voice to his follower; "do not our letters from Berne state, that in the early part of June this arch-juggler Cagliostro was then resident in that city, and openly carrying on his usual practices?"

"They do," returned the other, in the same suppressed voice, "and I would stake my life on Legendre's fidelity. If his information be unfounded, he is deceived himself. Cagliostro must either have a double, or possess the power of ubiquity."

"Be pleased to tell us, Monsieur le Comte," said the Lieutenant, again addressing himself to D'Ostalis, "how your interview with Cagliostro originated; by what means you became aware of his presence in Paris; and from what

motives you were induced to communicate with him?"

"At a réunion," replied D'Ostalis, "held at the Duke de Fronsac's, the conversation turned on Cagliostro; and a certain Chevalier de Crespigny told me, that the individual who had been celebrated under that name was then in Paris, and gave me his address."

Again the Lieutenant and his follower exchanged looks of extreme surprise.

"Wonder on wonder," exclaimed the officer to his satellite; "why this Chevalier de Crespigny was our informant on the present occasion. Pray, Monsieur le Comte, is this Chevalier a friend of yours?"

"By no means," said the Count. "I have only met him at De Fronsac's."

"This must be looked to," said the Lieutenant, taking out his pocket-book, and making

a memorandum. Count D'Ostalis then detailed the whole of his adventure with Cagliostro, omitting only the name of the Marchioness de Montolieu.

"And who was the lady who evinced so much emotion at this simple piece of jugglery?"

"Excuse me," said the Count.

"Monsieur le Comte," said the Lieutenant firmly, "we honour your delicacy, but the name must be revealed. The public interest is a paramount law, to which every other consideration must give way. Nay, the safety of the lady's reputation will be best consulted by yielding to my request. For if we are forced to make farther researches, the whole affair may become known to persons for whose discretion I cannot answer."

Thus pressed, the Count D'Ostalis, after much hesitation, gave the name of the Marchioness.

"Could you identify the apartments where this strange scene took place?"

"Most certainly," replied the Count.

"Then let us instantly hurry there," exclaimed the Lieutenant. "If we cannot catch the fox in his hole, we shall find it still warm. At all events, that is the spot where we shall best trace his machinations, and obtain intelligence of his movements. We are three, and well armed. Duperron, lend the Count one of your pistols—let us lose no time—every moment is precious. The fiacre we came in, waits at your porte cochère, Count."

The Count D'Ostalis saw that he should only expose himself to suspicion by betraying any reluctance to accompany the Lieutenant. He therefore shrugged his shoulders, and prepared to follow him, with as good a grace as possible.

The fiacre drove rapidly, until it reached the Rue St. Honoré.

"That is the house," said the Count, "in which Cagliostro lodged."

The fiacre was stopped. The party entered the shop.

"Are you the proprietor of the apartments over this shop?" said the Lieutenant to the master of the shop.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Are your lodgings occupied at present?"

"No, Monsieur; they have been vacant a fortnight. I should be happy to let you have them at four louis a week."

The Lieutenant and his follower gazed at each other, with an air of helpless disappointment. At length the former said to his assistant: "Run up stairs, Duperron, and take a glance at the rooms."

The follower obeyed. He soon returned; and whispered to his leader, that the apartment presented no traces of having been recently occupied.

"What was the name of your last lodger?" said the Lieutenant.

"He was a Swiss baron, whose usual place of residence is Berne. He called himself Baron Walden."

"Describe his appearance."

"A tall old man, with grey hair."

"Are you certain, Count, that this is the house?"

"Perfectly certain," replied Count D'Ostalis.

"Did the Baron receive many visitors?" said the Lieutenant to the master.

"I cannot say," answered the latter; "for he was waited upon by his own servants; and I had but little communication with him."

The Lieutenant looked distressed, like a hound at fault. "Come," said he to his follower, "let us go. Nothing more can be done here. I watched the man closely while I put my questions; and if, with that unconcerned visage, he be in the remotest degree privy to Cagliostro's proceedings, I have scanned the face of guilt for twenty years in vain."

He then briefly informed the master of the house, that he did not feel disposed to take the apartments on the terms demanded; and the party vacated the shop, leaving the owner in a state of great surprise and indignation at the authoritative style of their questions, and the ultimate rejection of his lodgings.

The party mounted the fiacre, and drove towards the Hôtel D'Ostalis.

The Lieutenant's face was thoughtful and gloomy; the follower seemed to consider it

necessary to compose his features after the fashion of his superior. The Count D'Ostalis, though not naturally proud or supercilious, so completely lived, and had his being, in the fashionable circles, that he was absolutely incapable of conversing with any one who did not move in that sphere, and understand its peculiar language. The party therefore rode along for some time in silence. At length, the strength of the Lieutenant's feelings seemed to compel him, by an irresistible impulse, to speak. Apparently he was rather actuated by a desire to express his feelings, than by any expectation of obtaining the applause or sympathy of his audience; for his eyes were fixed on vacancy while he spoke.

"What would Monsieur de Sartines (Minister of Police under Louis the Fifteenth) have said, if he had seen our morning's work?

Strange times!—fearful times! Things cannot remain as they are, that is certain; and what will be the result of change? God only knows, Monsieur le Comte. The country is ruined."

"Upon my honour," replied Count D'Ostalis, with a slight yawn, "I can't agree with you: I see no symptoms of change. Is not society as brilliant as ever? Are not our saloons as crowded, our costume as splendid, and our conversation as pointed and witty, as in the time of the 'Grand Monarque'? It is true, our opera has lately suffered some terrible losses; but it still continues to be a glory to our own country, and a wonder to all others."

"Yes," answered the Lieutenant, with bitterness; "the world's outside is still gay enough, I grant. True, the sun is shining, and the sky is bright; but methinks I sometimes hear the rumbling of an approaching earthquake. Yes

—France is ruined. The secret police is losing its power. There is a spirit abroad, which we have in vain endeavoured to lay: we suppress it in one place, and it bursts out in another. Something is ever stirring beneath the surface of society. We see the ferment, yet we cannot stifle the ebullition; nor, which is worse, can we discover its source. We are surrounded by plots, of whose existence we are well aware; and yet we cannot penetrate their ramifications, and reach their authors. Yes—I repeat it: the secret police—the key-stone of the arch on which monarchy rests—the real sceptre by which a wise government governs—the secret police, has lost its power."

"And yet it seems to me," said the Count, "that you apprehend, imprison, and hang, as many rogues as usual."

"Do you imagine, Monsieur le Comte, that

the immense police of this great kingdom is kept up for the purpose of protecting society from vulgar depredations against life and property? Think you that we spend millions of livres, and employ thousands of agents, to hunt down a few burglars and pickpockets? Such gentry are easily dealt with. The whole society, with the exception of their own miserable associates, are at war with them—are interested in exposing and punishing them. As it is, not ten in a hundred escape detection; and were we not occupied with other and higher matters, not one in a hundred would elude justice."

"Truly," replied the Count; "I always fancied, if one may hint such an opinion without offence to you, Monsieur, that the apprehension and suppression of such individuals, were the main object, and chief business of a police establishment."

"You are mistaken, Count;—no doubt it forms a part of our duties, to guard as much as possible the throats and strong-boxes of the good citizens of Paris; but a much higher charge also devolves upon us—that of defending the country, or, in other words, the government, against its domestic foes. Thieves and robbers are bad persons, no doubt, but they do not upset governments."

"And who are they whose efforts tend to that result?" asked the Count.

"Ruined nobles," answered the Lieutenant; "who, being scouted by their own order for their vices, determine to be revenged upon it by their crimes. Fanatic philosophers,—who would pound the whole edifice of society into dust, in order that they might have the pleasure of re-arranging the scattered atoms into mathematical lines. Believers in human perfectabi-

lity—mad and disappointed geniuses, whose writings infect all who read them with contagious insanity. Turbulent and restless spirits,—who plot at home, because they have not the opportunity of fighting abroad. Desperate adventurers, to whom any change must be acceptable. These, and a thousand such, make the first breach in the time-honoured institutions of the country. When that is accomplished, the rabble rush in. Both besiegers and assailants are involved in common ruin, and a scene of undistinguished carnage and plunder ensues."

"But does Cagliostro come under any of the classes you have mentioned?"

"Be assured, Count, that it was not without bitter proof, both of his inclination and ability to be dangerous, that his most Christian Majesty banished this man from France. Some

of his intrigues we have actually detected; and we have strong reasons for believing, that he is the prime mover and agent in a series of dark and traitorous machinations, which a Prince of the ——"

Here the attention of the Lieutenant was attracted by a loud and significant cough from his follower. He seemed to take a hint from the signal, for, instead of finishing his accusation against Cagliostro, he recurred to his former subject of conversation.

"No, Monsieur le Comte, the true business of a police is, first to protect the country,—that is, the government,—and afterwards its subjects. To watch the first symptoms of disaffection; to crush, in the outset, the smallest expression of discontent; to ascertain and identify the few troublesome spirits, who are the leaven that causes the mass of society to

ferment: for passive obedience is the general rule of mankind, and rebellion only the exception. To find out such characters, and to have them cared for—such are the real duties of an extensive police in an absolute monarchy. To chase petty-larceny rogues is a very secondary consideration. In the time of Monsieur de Sartines, his late majesty, Louis the Fifteenth, betted one of his courtiers, that the police would apprize themselves, if they chose, of the manner in which he spent his time for a whole week, let him take what precaution he would."

"Did the king win the wager?" asked the Count.

"He did."

"And now a banished outlaw is able to elude your utmost efforts to apprehend him?"

The Lieutenant shook his head, and looked dismal. "What is the cause?" resumed the

Count, "of the diminished vigour of the police?"

"Want of funds, Monsieur le Comte. The Government is embarrassed.—How can the annual deficit be reduced? 'We will not register your edicts,' say the Parliaments. 'We will not pay the taxes, unless the edicts, which impose them are registered,' cry the people. 'We will not surrender a single livre of our grants and pensions,' reiterate the courtiers. The money is not forthcoming; and the retrenchment falls, not on the expenses of the Court, but on the effective force of Government. The salaries of our agents are in arrear—our secret-service money is withheld, and we are powerless. At this moment, Monsieur le Comte, the Government—that is the police, for in a monarchy they are identical—resembles an old lion destitute of teeth and claws, and

terrible only in appearance. If we are still obeyed, it is rather from the force of habit and the recollection of our ancient strength, than from any power which we at present possess to enforce submission."

"This is all very shocking," said the Count, taking a pinch of snuff, "and may be very true; but the weakness of the police does not prevent me from going to the opera; and it seems to me, that the king can do the same; although he does not possess, like his grandfather, the power of informing himself how every noble in the kingdom passes his time. There is still some comfort."

"Ah, mighty fine, Monsieur le Comte," replied the Inspector of Police, "you, like all the rest of your class, are blind to your own true interests. You do not support the monarchy with earnestness and cordi-

ality. But if the bourgeoisie sweep away the monarchy, will they respect your privileges? your seigneurial rights gall the peasant, far more than the king's Lettres de Cachet. But we have arrived, I see, at the Hotel d'Ostalis. Monsieur le Comte, I beg a thousand pardons for the trouble which, in the performance of the king's service, I have been obliged to give you, and have the honour to wish you good morning. Yet, before we part, pray inform me whether I am likely to find the Duke de Fronsac at home: I must enquire about his friend, the Chevalier de Crespigny." The Count stated that the Duke seldom left home until an hour later; and the Lieutenant of Police and his myrmidon drove off.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

In the evening, Count d' Ostalis betook himself to the Théâtre Français. He had no particular motive for preferring that theatre to any other; his visit was the pure result of what, for want of a better term, we call chance. On entering the orchestra, the first person on whom his eye fell was the Duke de Fronsac. The Count instantly made his way to this latter personage, with the view of ascertaining the result of the Lieutenant's mission. The piece represented on the

stage was "Le Fils Naturel," one of Diderot's plays, written in the style which the critics of the day called "La Comédie larmoyante."

The Count could not suppress his impatience to tell his story. "You do not seem much entertained, De Fronsac, with this lachrymose comedy: listen to me—I will relate a scene from real life, in which I played a part this morning, a thousand times more exciting and mysterious than what they are enacting on yonder stage."

"I too have had an adventure," said the Duke.

"My dear Duke," said the Count, imploringly, "let me tell my story first."

The Duke smiled, and bowed consent. The Count then proceeded to detail the visit of the police, and their fruitless search in pursuit of Cagliostro. He further related the substance of the conversation which took place between himself

and the officer, on their way back to the Hôtel D'Ostalis.

The Duke listened with deep and earnest attention.

"This is a strange story," said he, "that Cagliostro, after such a narrow escape from the vengeance of an exasperated and despotic court, after getting quit for his intrigues in the necklace affair with such an easy sentence as banishment, should have had the temerity to return to France, and again put his head into the wolf's mouth! It seems really incredible. But that he should have eluded all the researches of the police appears still more extraordinary. My adventure is the sequel to yours; but instead of explaining anything, it makes the matter ten times more dark and mysterious." The Duke then stated that the same officer, who formed the hero of Count D'Ostalis' story, had subsequently called

upon him, and made divers enquiries after the Chevalier de Crespigny.

" I shall never forget the man's face when I told him, I first met Crespigny at the Palais Royal, where the Duke of Orleans introduced him to me as his particular friend; and that Monsieur le Chevalier had set out for Switzerland four-and-twenty hours ago. He looked like a chess-player when stale mated; or rather like the respectable proprietor of a rich fruit garden, when caught in one of his own man-traps. Never did one of his own victims, when arrested by the strong gripe of the thief-catcher, exhibit a whiter face."

" It is pretty certain," said the Count, " that the information forwarded by Crespigny, was purposely meant to send the good Lieutenant on a fool's errand."

" Clearly," said the Duke ; " the affair seems

to have been got up in utter mockery of the existing government, for the mere sake of bewildering and confusing the police. The Duke paused a moment, and then added in a thoughtful tone: "I seldom take notice of public affairs; but I confess this strange decay in the power of the police makes me feel uneasy. The Lieutenant was right; there is a storm brewing. The government, though it apparently continues with unimpaired prerogatives, declines every day in actual strength. It is evident to me, that the government cannot even collect the already existing taxes, and dare not enforce the edicts which it has forcibly registered. Still money must be had; fresh taxes must be levied; and the result of all these difficulties and distraction, will be the convocation of the States-General."

"Never!" said the Count D'Ostalis, with a

self-sufficient shake of his head; "the king might as well lay down both crown and sceptre."

"Shall I tell you a secret," rejoined the Duke; "the measure is already determined upon. The Archbishop of Toulouse has tried every expedient in vain: he has exhausted all the resources of his rash and incapable mind; and lest any successor should cast shame on him, by effecting what he has failed to perform; he is resolved to throw up the remaining chances of the game, and to recommend himself the Convocation of the States General. In less than a month you will see an order of council to that effect."

"After all," said the Count, "what harm can result from a meeting of the States. They will vote the necessary supplies, and then separate."

"Trust me," cried the Duke, "the king will

not so easily dismiss the demon he has evoked. I do not in my conscience believe that either moderation or stupidity are the predominant characteristics of the French nation."

"Well," returned the Count, if they do abolish lettres de cachet, and otherwise clip the King's claws, which are in my opinion a little too long and sharp at present, I think I could pardon them."

"Admitted," said the Duke; "but this same process of clipping has such extraordinary fascinations for popular politicians, that when they have once commenced the practice, they never can be persuaded to leave off. Suppose, when they have shortened the King's claws, they should take it into their heads to dock your Countship's crest?"

"That would be awkward," replied the Count, who seemed struck by the observation "I should remonstrate with them."

"Ay," sarcastically rejoined the Duke, "just as a lamb remonstrates beneath the talons of the eagle, and with the same effect. No, Count D'Ostalis, believe me, the consequences of this measure are incalculable."

"Yet the necessity for it," said the Count somewhat pettishly, "is your own fault. Why did you not, as one of the Notables, assent to Calonne's plans, and enable him to carry them into execution?"

"I would have done both," replied the Duke, but was overruled by my colleagues. In truth they were disgusted at the boundless profusion with which Calonne had wasted the Royal treasures. He allowed Monsieur and the Count d'Artois to help themselves to the tune of sixty or seventy millions of livres. As to Marie Antoinette, her pleasures had cost the country double that sum. Take a single instance. As a delicate compliment to the Countess de Po-

lignac, the Count received on one occasion a gratuity of six hundred thousand livres for the valuable public services which he had performed in the capacity of maître-d'hôtel to his own wife. What the minister's own share of the plunder amounted to, God only knows."

"Will the Archbishop," asked the Count, "remain minister?"

"He anticipates as much," said the Duke; "but that is not the only miscalculation he has made since he became first minister."

"Then who will succeed him?"

"The author of the Compte-rendu," replied the Duke, "the banker-minister, Monsieur Necker.

"Good," said the Count; "the very man that the occasion requires."

"Do you speak as a friend or an enemy of the present system. Necker is a good stock-

jobber, but a bad minister. As a political pilot he is well intentioned, but imbecile; and will run the ship on every single rock and sandbank that lies in the troubled sea before us."

"My dear Duke," said the Count yawning, "until the present moment I never found you dull. I consider you to be the most magnificent sinner in Europe; and I, as an humble dabbler in vice, of course feel the utmost reverence for your character. I would bear more from you than most men; but I feel myself utterly unable to endure any farther disquisitions on ministers, pilots, or states-general. If our heads must ache, let it be with wine, and not with politics. Will all these dreadful calamities happen to-night?"

"Perhaps not," said the Duke.

"To-morrow?"

"No."

"The day after?"

"No."

"Then let us be happy," said the Count, "till the end of the week, and leave the future to take care of itself."

"Well, perhaps, the resource of the hunted ostrich is the wisest we can pursue on the present occasion. To change, then, the topic, or rather to resume our original subject, tell me something more respecting [illegible] singular character, Cagliostro. What was the style of his address and conversation during the interview you were fortunate enough to obtain with him?"

"His manners were captivating," returned the Count; "his elocution was rapid, dazzling, overpowering. He seems willing to initiate you in all the mysteries of his craft. He affects to explain everything intricate or puzzling with the greatest frankness; but after you have lis-

tened to him for a few minutes, you perceive that he is only deluding your understanding with chimeras, and laughing at your vain efforts to follow his meaning. If you attempt to sift his discourse, or fix him to a particular point, he envelopes you in a cloud of words,—first whirls you into the airy regions of abstract speculation, then drags you through a dark chaos of past facts and opinions, until fatigued by the multiplicity of the ideas he has forced on your imagination, and bewildered by the labyrinth of tortuous reasoning which he has compelled you to traverse, you entirely lose your senses. Then, by a sort of metaphysical sleight, he puts you down exactly where he took you up; leaving you certain of nothing but his own surpassing power of mystification."

"I should like to see the man," said the Duke, "who has managed to create so deep an

impression upon a being as light-hearted as yourself."

"The influence," continued the Count, "which he contrived to acquire over me in a quarter of an hour's conversation, has since struck me as supernatural. I was as pliable as wax in his hands; he moulded me to what shape he pleased. He asked me for fifty louis; and I gave them. It is well he did not demand half my fortune; or I certainly should have complied with the requisition. I believe I should have let him draw my front teeth if he had wanted them; so irresistible was the fascination of his wonderful and universal genius."

"You are, indeed, an enthusiastic idolater of skill," said the Duke, laughing, "if you can persist in adoring it when you become its victim. I suppose if he had cut your throat, your ghost would have risen and complimented him upon

the anatomical precision with which he had divided your jugular. But, joking apart, I wish chance had thrown this extraordinary individual in my way; I am engaged in an affair in which a personage of this sort might have rendered me infinite service."

"I would not advise you," said the Count, "to waste your time in endeavouring to trace out his retreat; if the police have been baffled in the attempt, it is not likely that amateurs like ourselves should succeed."

"That inference, Count, is what logicians call a non sequitur," said a voice from behind. "Count Cagliostro may be willing to communicate with men of rank and honour, though he chooses to remain invisible to the minions of tyranny."

Count D'Ostalis and the Duke were seated on the back row of the orchestra, which, as

every reader who has seen the interior of a French theatre will recollect, is only separated from the rest of the pit by a slight railing. The voice came from behind. The Count turned sharply round, and saw that the observation proceeded from an individual seated in the front row of the pit, who was leaning on the partition-rail, into the orchestra. He was a swarthy, middle-aged man, wrapped in a cloak, although the weather was warm. The aristocratic bile of the Count was roused by the idea of a roturier daring to overhear a nobleman's conversation, and presuming to criticise it with such easy familiarity.

"How now, fellow," said he, in a tone of ineffable contempt. "What means this insolence? are you drunk?"

"No, Monsieur le Comte; I am neither intoxicated with wine, nor yet with pride, as

some, who think themselves my superiors, appear to be."

"This passes endurance," said the Count, with increasing choler. "If you are troublesome, I shall summon the police."

"Patience, most noble Count," replied the stranger. "Do you call those troublesome who would help you to your wishes?"

The Count looked about, as if to see whether the guard was at his post.

"Stop, D'Ostalis," whispered the Duke, who had not been inattentive to the preceding colloquy. "I suspect this man to be a confederate of Cagliostro's. I am certain, by the firm outline of his lips, that threats are of no service. The argument of the sun, not that of the wind, must be used to beguile that steady being of his cloak."—"My friend," continued he, addressing the pertinacious stranger, "it

seems you have taken the trouble to listen to our conversation. Are you acquainted with the individual who was the subject of our discourse?"

"As well as a mortal can be."

"Do you know the place of his retreat?"

"Cagliostro never retreated from his enemies; though he may occasionally choose to be invisible to them. I know, however, his place of residence."

"Retreat or residence, it is all the same to us," said the Duke. "If you will conduct us thither, our gratitude will not confine itself to thanks."

"Permit me," calmly replied the stranger, "to ascertain, beforehand, the probable limits of your grateful generosity."

"Oh, do not be afraid; we will not give you less than a louis-d'or."

"That sum," rejoined the other, "is far more than my intended services deserve, and infinitely exceeds what my own natural modesty would allow me to demand. But the chief I serve, knowing well my morbid delicacy on this subject, has strictly enjoined me not to accept less than five louis-d'or for directing a stranger to his residence. I dare not disobey his injunctions."

"Poor innocent!" said the Duke, drily; "your fidelity, however, bears it own reward."

"Moreover," continued the stranger, "my chief, profoundly penetrated with the general uncertainty of all mundane affairs, and especially looking to the exceeding mutability of the human heart, farther enjoined me, not to stir hand nor foot in such cases, till the aforesaid five pieces of gold were counted into my reluctant palm."

"What say you to his offer, D'Ostalis?" inquired the Duke, doubtfully, of his companion. "How can we be certain that he will perform what he promises?"

"If that be your only difficulty," said the Count, "pay him instantly what he asks. If there be any truth in the proverb, 'like master like man,' he is, beyond all doubt, a genuine follower of Cagliostro. This last trait savours strongly of that great man's style. It is quite in accordance with the *à priori* system of philosophy. He pretends to reverse the inductive method, and invariably pockets the results before he performs the facts."

"Good!" rejoined the Duke, turning to the stranger, who sat awaiting the result of their conference with great indifference. "Well, my friend, for once I will satisfy the exorbitant demands of your obedient modesty; but Heaven

grant that my next petitioner be of the impudent kind." He then counted the pieces of money into the stranger's hand.

"I will now leave the theatre," said the man. "Do not follow me immediately, or you will excite suspicion. Five minutes hence, you will find me waiting outside, in the vestibule of the entrance."

The foregoing colloquy did not excite so much attention as might have been expected; for the conversation was carried on in low though energetic tones; and the curtain having fallen, on the termination of the first piece, there was some bustle and confusion in the theatre.

"I much fear," remarked the Duke, "that when we reach the rendezvous, we shall find neither man nor money."

"Don't alarm yourself," answered the Count; "I am certain the man was an agent of Ca-

gliostro's; and if that sublime genius has taken us in hand, be assured that the extractive process will not be limited to five louis."

"Perhaps," said the Duke, "this pretended emissary of Cagliostro's was the arch juggler himself."

"I think not," replied the other; "the man has caught a portion of his master's style, but in voice, features, and figure, bore no resemblance to him."

On reaching the appointed place, the Duke discovered the injustice of his suspicions. The stranger had already repaired to the spot, and was waiting for them.

"Now, Messieurs," said he, in a low tone, "follow me." The two noblemen obeyed the order, and picked their way as well as they could, along the dimly-lighted and dirty streets and lanes through which he led them.

At last their conductor called a coach. They entered it. The stranger made an apology for putting down the blinds, and the whole party proceeded in darkness and silence. At last they stopped. The noblemen found themselves in a quarter of Paris which was totally unknown to them. The houses were miserable and beggarly in the extreme. The few inhabitants who had not retired to rest, from their tattered garbs, and dirty villainous aspect, seemed fit tenants of such dwellings. The whole place was redolent of penury and filth. At one of the least promising of these mansions, their conductor seemed to give a peculiar kind of knock with his knuckle. The door flew open. They entered, and groped their way up a dark staircase. Suddenly they missed their conductor.

"Curses on the knave, he has vanished,"

whispered the Duke, who was foremost, to the Count, behind.

"Shall we go back, and burst open the street-door?" said the other, hesitating.

"No," returned the Duke. "I see the light through a chink. Let us push boldly on.—Courage is generally the safest policy, and never more so than when you are in a rogue's power."

They felt their way up to the end of the passage which terminated the staircase. They placed their hands against the place through which the light shone. The planks formed a door, which gave way to the pressure, and disclosed to the eyes of the astonished gropers a spacious and elegant apartment, furnished with equal luxury and magnificence, and illuminated by brilliant chandeliers. The change, from utter darkness to a blaze of light, was at

first so overpowering, as to disable them from discriminating objects; and when a richly dressed personage, whom Count D'Ostalis at once recognized to be Cagliostro, advanced to welcome them, they hardly knew whether he had been previously sitting in the room, or if he had entered it at the same time as themselves from another side.

"Welcome, Messieurs," said he, extending a hand to each. "Monsieur le Comte, this is an unexpected pleasure. That your friend should pay me a visit is nothing extraordinary: he needs my services;—but I thought, that an economical dread of the *à priori* system of philosophy would have frightened you away."

Count D'Ostalis made no reply, but produced a pocket-book, and began to write.

"Your follower, Monsieur le Comte," observed the Duke, "has lost no time in making his report."

"Oh! Pierre," answered Cagliostro, "is a sympathetic valet. I have rubbed his ear with Sir Kenelm Digby's powder, so that every thing he hears I hear also. But what is this?" added he, as Count D'Ostalis handed him a cheque for a hundred louis.

"A proof of my readiness to conform to the *à priori* system of money payment," answered the Count, with a smile.

"I forgive you, Count," replied Cagliostro, tearing up the cheque. "You think that the gentle fine I levied on you was meant to satisfy a base thirst of lucre. Never were you more mistaken. It is a slight penance I impose on every fresh aspirant to my acquaintance,—a sort of test by which I ascertain the real value of their pretended curiosity. If their ardour for scientific mystery will not induce them to submit to this trifling loss, I renounce all communication with them, and disappear."

"I understand the hint," said the Duke. "D'Ostalis, lend me one of your blank cheques, —I bank with the same house as yourself." The Duke filled up the cheque with an order for two hundred louis.

Cagliostro scrutinized the document, and then silently deposited it in his pocket.

"Now, Count Cagliostro," said the Duke, "my initiatory penance being duly performed, I advertise you, that in this good city of Paris —the focus of unbelief to a nation of infidels— there exists not a more incredulous man than myself."

"I pity you, Monsieur le Duc. The dogmatic sceptic is as liable to error as the most credulous bigot. What avails it to escape the deception of others, if you are constantly deceiving yourself. He who mistakes dreams for reality, errs, no doubt; but not more than he

who persists in deeming realities to be dreams. Well said my old friend, Martin Luther, with whose phantasm I have so often conversed,—'The human mind is like a drunken peasant on horseback; if you prop him up on one side, he falls over on the other.'"

"You have talked to the founder of Protestantism? then you affect the power of raising the dead?" remarked the Duke, with a civil smile of contempt. "Do you deal in the supernatural? that is an old trade."

"Monsieur le Duc," calmly replied Cagliostro, "what do you mean by the supernatural? If that vague and general term, nature, has any meaning at all, it comprehends all which is throughout time and space. It implies the sum total of existing entities, whether of thought or matter. The very word supernatural, then, is a contradiction in terms—a solecism, because it

expresses that there is something more—beyond and above what it asserts: in short, that the whole does not include the parts. I cannot counterwork the smallest of nature's laws; but I may be acquainted with certain secret principles in those laws, which are unknown to the rest of Adam's race. I can produce no phenomena which are not already inherent in matter; but I may possess more skill in developing and applying the elementary powers, than the whole crowd of sceptics who laugh at me."

"Well done," cried the Duke, laughing; "you have explained away part of your indiscreet declaration, in a very lawyer-like and plausible manner; but there still remains your imprudent boast that you can raise the dead. Reason and refine as you will—draw what hair-breadth distinctions you please—you can neither realize nor justify this rash expression."

"The expression is yours, not mine," replied Cagliostro. "I never spoke of raising the dead. Whether any portion of mind survives the dissolution of its frail and curious tenement, and whether that surviving portion retains its former consciousness, and individual identity, is a mystery which I at least have never been able to fathom. But this I know, that when the simplest arrangement of organic matter is disturbed or broken, all the theologians, poets, and philosophers in the world, were their wits condensed into a single skull, and multiplied a millionfold, could never recombine the scattered particles into their original form."

"All this is rational enough," said the Duke; "but you cannot efface from my mind the recollection of your previous conversation."

"Neither I nor any other man can raise the dead," replied Cagliostro; "of that be sure;

but disbelieve upon reasonable grounds, and not from a blind vague feeling of incredulity. The whole human race could not restore life to a single blade of withered grass. How then could they reanimate the far more complicated organization of the human body? If we cannot perform the lesser task, it is clear we cannot the greater."

"Monsieur de Cagliostro," said the Duke with a smile, "we will pass, if you please, to another subject. It seems to me, that you are talking against time—I mean that you are prolonging the conversation, until you can invent an excuse for your indiscreet expression."

"I again reiterate," exclaimed Cagliostro, "that the expression of raising the dead was yours, not mine."

"Yet you spoke of conversing with Martin Luther. To do this, you must first have raised him."

"Not so," replied Cagliostro. "By natural means I have acquired so great a power over the imagination and nervous system, that I can cause the phantasm of a deceased individual to be actually visible and audible to sight and hearing, although no real apparition be present extrinsic to the brain of the person operated upon. In a word, I can affect the optic and auditory nerves, without the aid of external impressions."

"Let us make the experiment," cried Count D'Ostalis, ever eager after anything that promised excitement or amusement, and glad to stop a conversation which had already wearied him. "Show us Jean Jacques Rousseau."

"I have no objection," said the Duke; "but I warn Count Cagliostro, that whatever success he may have obtained, in making people of irritable nerves and overwrought imaginations

the dupes of their own weakness, it is mere loss of time to attempt the same plan with me. If he wants me to see visions, and hear prophecies, he must have recourse to ventriloquism, and magic lanterns. Assuredly I shall behold nothing but what he actually shows."

"Reserve your jests, Duke, for the moment of failure," replied Cagliostro. Then turning towards the other nobleman, he observed, "Is it possible that the gay, light, unthinking Count D'Ostalis can wish to contemplate the gloomy, despairing, repining, thought-tortured, Rousseau? Is there in the moral world a secret attraction between minds of the most different quality; as in the material universe there is a constant affinity between the most opposite elements?"

"I am sure I don't know," answered Count D'Ostalis with a yawn; "I wish that instead of

moralizing, you would show me Rousseau's ghost."

"Your wish shall be gratified," replied Cagliostro; "you shall behold the Genevese enthusiast."

He went to a chest, from which he took two moderate-sized phials, and presented them to his visitors.

"You must prepare yourself by drinking these cordials," said he.

The two noblemen complied with his request. Count D'Ostalis seemed sobered by the act; but the Duke appeared determined to maintain his bravado to the last.

"I suppose, Count Cagliostro, you always keep full-length portraits of Voltaire and Rousseau ready painted on the slides of your gallantee show. By Bacchus," added he, smacking his lips, "this liquor is delicious. Can you let me

have a few bottles from your stock? Name your own price."

"I am not a wine-merchant," drily replied Cagliostro. He then went to the side of the apartment; and touching probably some secret spring in the wall, the tapestry rolled up like the curtain of a theatre, and disclosed a dark recess, filled with a quantity of unknown and uncouth apparatus. The Duke fancied that he saw huge masses of polished steel, fashioned somewhat after the shapes which are ordinarily given to magnets. Coils of wire, which were apparently interminable, together with wheels, and pullies, and the other machinery requisite for producing motion. But the darkness of the recess prevented him from viewing any object with precision or certainty. Across the entrance was placed a black couch, on which two persons might recline. The external sur-

face of this piece of furniture had the lustre peculiar to metallic substances, and seemed to be formed of a curiously woven tissue of different sized wires. Above the couch was suspended a sort of canopy, which seemed composed of the same materials.

"Now, Messieurs," said Cagliostro, "seat yourselves on this metallic sofa."

They obeyed the order. Count D'Ostalis was serious; but the Duke burst into a fit of laughter, in which however an acute ear might have detected something forced.

Both soon reclined their heads upon the back of the couch. In another minute they began to breathe hard, although their eyes were still open. Soon they were buried in profound slumber.

How long they remained in this state, neither the Count nor the Duke could tell; but from

what they afterwards saw, they presumed their artificial slumbers were terminated by Cagliostro himself. When they awoke, they found that extraordinary man bending over them, with looks of intense attention. With a large watch, which he held in his hand, he intently marked the time. So bewildered and overwrought were their senses by what they had seen during the trance, that some time elapsed before they could recollect where they were.

The Duke was the first to speak. "Pardon me, Cagliostro," said he with an air of the deepest respect, "for the foolish expression I was rash enough to apply to you, before I was witness of your power. It is indeed great! But how could I suppose it from your conversation? It is so common à talent in France to talk well. Nay, the very ability with which you played at words, made me doubt your practical skill in other matters."

"Make no apologies, Duke, but tell me what saw you?"

"Did you not see him yourself?" asked both the noblemen in great surprise.

"I saw nothing," replied Cagliostro, "for I did not touch the sofa."

"That is strange," said the Duke, "for I still continued to view both D'Ostalis and yourself."

"And so did I," added Count D'Ostalis.

"And whom saw you besides," asked Cagliostro.

"We saw an old man," replied Count D'Ostalis, "who seemed aged with sufferings rather than years. His face, and especially his figure, indicated that he had once been eminently handsome, or at any rate interesting. His forehead was furrowed by grief or thought. His eyes were sunken, but still shone clear and

bright. His cheeks were hollow; but, above all, there were present about the mouth those deep and fatal lines which inevitably follow the bitter and repeated conflict of contending passions."

"Why, D'Ostalis," interrupted the Duke, "when did you ever notice the lines of a face before, or moralize thereon? The magic sleep has inspired him," added he to Cagliostro; "the description is however admirably exact; I subscribe to every word of it."

"And what said he?" enquired Cagliostro.

"I will tell you," said the Duke; "I recollect every syllable; his words are still ringing in my ears. At first no sound reached us, although his lips moved, and he seemed to speak. At length we heard a murmur, as of a distant voice. It approached nearer; and at last fell upon our ears, in distinct and melancholy ac-

cents: ‘Gay and gilded oppressors of your brother-man—butterfly tyrants—silken despots—ye have lost your ancestral strength and armour, and yet dare hope to continue with impunity the feudal outrages of your stout forefathers. The career of your tribe draweth nigh to a close.’ (Here,” said the Duke, “I smiled contemptuously on the surly plebeian.) ‘Ay,’ continued the voice, ‘sneer, scoff, and be deaf to all that might warn you of your approaching fate. Flutter on from pleasure to pleasure, shout, revel, and be gay, even as the sinners were before the flood. A hurricane more hideous than the watery deluge is silently gathering. A darker doom than that which befell the sinners of the old world awaits but the ripening touch of time to burst upon your unconscious and devoted heads. The feudal edifice, under which ye have lived in pride and power for

eight centuries, totters to its base. In vain the walls rise strong and high. In vain the haughty turrets frown defiance on their plebeian assailants. Look to the foundations—they have long ago crumbled into dust. Hark! the popular cannon is thundering at the gates. Kings and nobles! it is the people's turn now—they may not be resisted.

"Ay, rush on, shed seas of blood, fill each neighbouring country with ruined exiles. Accumulate the glorious pile of broken hearts and severed heads, until the mangled and gory heap touch the clouds. All will not avail. Never, oh! never, shall a land inhabited by Frenchmen become the dwelling of free men. Light and cruel race!—half tiger, half monkey—ever ready to tear the hand that would caress ye, but fawning with more than spaniel baseness on the stern arm that is able to wield the rod of despotism;—can ye

hope that the tree of liberty will flourish, when watered with the blood of unoffending victims? Do ye dream that in uprooting the corner-stone of social order ye are laying the foundations of the arch of freedom? Already ye have entered the dull and fatal circle, which reconducts the groaning nations, after much toil, blood, and suffering, to the same miserable goal from whence they started—first, tyranny and revolt—then madness, confusion, anarchy—then tyranny again.' "

"You laugh at my descriptive powers," cried Count D'Ostalis, when the Duke had finished speaking; "I think I may compliment you on your improved memory; and yet I think I could enact the same feat myself, and repeat the speech verbatim."

"To the last moment of your existence," observed Cagliostro, "you will neither of you

forget the words which the Duke has just uttered, such is the peculiar virtue of yonder sofa."

"How do you relish the prophecy contained in the phantasm's discourse?" asked the Duke.

"It is not worth thinking about," carelessly replied the Count; "I am told that Rousseau, in his mad fits, used often to pour forth to his private friends similar vaticinations."

"The phantasm," said Cagliostro, "naturally repeats after death what its original was wont to utter during life; and both will prove true."

The Count D'Ostalis took a pinch of snuff. "Well," said he, "what will be my consolation is, that the storm won't fall till the end of the week; so, as I took the liberty to inform De Fronsac an hour ago, when he began to talk about politics, we may at any rate make ourselves happy till Sunday."

"And what," enquired the Duke, of Cagliostro, "do you predict will be my own individual fate amidst the awful convulsions which the phantom predicted?"

"I am neither seer nor prophet," replied Cagliostro, "but a humble follower of science endowed with no inspiration but the resources of my own skill. I cannot answer the question in my own person, but you may ascertain the truth yourself."

"By what means?"

"Seat yourself again on yonder mystic couch," replied Cagliostro. "This time you will lose your consciousness; and will not recollect anything that you may see, hear, or say. But when brought under the magneto-electric influence, you will readily answer all questions that are proposed to you respecting your own destiny."

"And how shall I ascertain the correctness of your report?" asked the Duke.

"Count D'Ostalis shall witness the process. Yet bethink you, it was not without good reason that Dame Nature hid the future from our prying eyes. The foreknowledge of your fate will not enable you to avoid it. The anticipation may affect your mind with terror—may inspire you with the profoundest caution, but all in vain. The anticipation, and the terror, and the caution, will constitute links in the immense chain of pre-ordained events—nay, perhaps, they may be made the very means of fulfilling your destiny."

"I should have thought," answered the Duke, "that a fatalism so complete as yours, would not have left me the choice of knowing my fate or remaining in ignorance: but be that as it may," (and his haughty lip curled as he

spoke) " be assured that terror forms no part of my composition. I would rather know the worst, and be satisfied."

" That is your deliberate resolution?" demanded Cagliostro.

" It is," replied the Duke firmly.

" Be it so. Your desire shall be gratified. It is a pity," muttered Cagliostro, as the Duke walked boldly up to the couch, and seated himself on it, " It is a pity so much moral courage and such indomitable resolution never found a fitting sphere of action."

Cagliostro gave him as before a preparatory draught, and then set his machinery in motion. The Duke speedily sunk into deep slumber. His eyes still remained open, but their sense was shut; and there was something in the fixed stare of his vacant pupils that made his companions feel that he did not perceive them.

Cagliostro, having accurately marked the time by his watch, at last said in a forced and unnaturally low tone of voice, "Duke de Fronsac, enact the last scene of thine own career."

The sleeping nobleman seemed immediately agitated by the most frightful convulsions. He struggled fiercely, like one contending with a crowd of assailants. The big drops of perspiration broke out on his brow; his eyes rolled with ghastly force and rapidity, and his whole appearance assumed the aspect of a victim resisting his murderers, with desperate but ineffectual efforts. At length words found their way in broken gasps from his labouring bosom. "Drive on—who stops my carriage—over the canaille, if they will not give way—ha! what means this? Weapons!—We are beset! Pierre! Jacques, use your pistols.—Back caitiff! on your life back!—Nay, if you will—ha! ha!

ha ! I have still the other ball !—Ah ! take, take your fingers from my throat—ruffians I defy you all - spit at you—Cagliostro ! demon ! What dost thou here !"

"This is dreadful ! damnable !" exclaimed Count D'Ostalis, exasperated beyond all endurance by the horrible exhibition : "Stop this scene instantly—or I will drag him off the sofa —I will by Heavens—"

"Patience !" said Cagliostro, "you will kill him if you are rash. I will break the trance. See here—" He applied a phial to the nostrils of the agonized nobleman. The latter instantly awoke, and arose from the sofa, like a person who has just recovered from an epileptic fit,—exhausted, but totally unconscious of the fearful struggles by which he has been convulsed.

"Good God," cried he, stretching himself, "how hot and weary I feel : what is this," continued he, putting his hand to his streaming

forehead. "Ha! what has happened? Monsieur de Cagliostro, what has blanched your cheeks and made your lips white? D'Ostalis, why do you shake and tremble so? What has happened? what have I said?"

Neither answered.

A heart more impenetrable to fear than the Duke de Fronsac's, never beat beneath a covering of flesh; but terror is of all human passions the most contagious; and under some circumstances the infection is irresistible. A cold chill of apprehension ran through his exhausted frame, as he stood gazing on the horror-stricken countenances of his companions.

"This matter," said he, "passes the bounds of a frolic. It is not however too late to retreat. Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro, I have a favour to ask of you. Tell me not a syllable of what you have heard or seen."

"It is unnecessary for me to make such a promise," answered Cagliostro, as I never intended to have opened my lips. I meant to have left both the prophecy and the interpretation entirely to your friend."

"And you, D'Ostalis," said the Duke, "may I request your silence?"

"Morbleu! You never made a request which I was more disposed to grant. If ever I whisper a word even to the walls of my own bedchamber, may the small-pox strike me."

"I do not think," said the Duke, as though he felt it necessary to justify his conduct, "that my present desire implies a want of resolution or courage; because a desire to be acquainted with the future formed no part of my purpose in coming hither. The object of my visit, was to ascertain the extent of a power which I thought fame had exaggerated."

"In what manner, then," asked Cagliostro, "do you wish to avail yourself of its influence?"

"First assure me of your assistance," said the Duke.

"Nay," replied Cagliostro, "I will make no blind promises. If you cannot trust my discretion, it is unwise to employ me as your ally."

"True," said the Duke; "will you then indulge me with an interview to-morrow evening?"

Cagliostro bowed assent.

The two nobleman then made their adieux, and retired. They found their egress easier than their entrance. The dark passage had been furnished with a lamp, which enabled them to find their way without any difficulty to the outer door. On reaching the street, they perceived their original conductor waiting for them with a fiacre. They re-entered the vehicle, and were set down at the exact spot where they at first mounted it.

CHAPTER XX.

ENLISTING A TARTAR WORSE THAN CATCHING HIM.

THE Duke was punctual to his appointment; he found the sympathetic valet in waiting at the place of rendezvous. The scene of the preceding night was again enacted, and the Duke found himself in the presence of Cagliostro.

"I slept well last night," said the Duke with an air of bravado, "in spite of your incantations."

"To business," replied the other, in a peremptory tone.

"With all my heart," said the Duke. "Without farther preface, I will then communicate to you the embarrassment I labour under. About six years ago, I took under my protection a young damsel of tender years, with the intention of promoting her, in due time, to the honourable post of favourite mistress—"

"Her parents sold her, then?"

"Not precisely; but those whom accident had invested with the authority of parents did so."

"How was this?" asked Cagliostro.

"The child was supposed to be the illegitimate scion of a noble house, and was assigned to the care of a poor artizan, a smith by trade, who received twice a year a small sum for his trouble. The allowance was discontinued; and

the smith and his wife were too happy to hand the child over to me for a few crowns. It saved them the trouble of murdering it."

"And where did this human sale take place?" inquired Cagliostro, with an anxiety which struck the Duke as remarkable.

"Why do you want to know?" demanded he. "The name of the place has no connexion with the enterprise I wish you to undertake."

"How can you tell that?" answered Cagliostro, in an authoritative manner. "Can you pretend to trace the invisible and subtle links which connect one event with another, apparently the most remote and independent? Unless you treat me with unreserved confidence, it is idle to proceed."

"I am not convinced by your reasoning," said the Duke; "but it is enough that you wish to know the facts. I respect even the whims

and phantasies of clever people. The name of the village where this said smith lived, was, I think, Forni, in the district of Perugia; and that of the man was, if I am not mistaken, Carlo Borromeo."

"Are you certain of these names?" inquired Cagliostro, in a low, hoarse tone.

"Nearly so.—But what ails you? you are as white as you were the other night, after listening to my unconscious prophecies."

"It is nothing,"—gasped Cagliostro;—"an internal spasm.—Now it is past.—The facts you have stated, Duke, are of the greatest importance. I should have understood nothing without them."

"Well," said the Duke, "enlighten yourself your own way. Let me continue. I represented myself to the girl as her guardian, and gave her to understand that she was the daugh-

ter of a decayed noble, who had once been my friend, and who was forced, from poverty, to leave her in the care of the brutes from whom I rescued her. I bestowed on her the best of educations, at least as far as accomplishments went. An old priest took care of her religion; and her morals were left to take care of themselves. All this proceeded admirably; and at sixteen the child had ripened into an absolute Venus."

"What then?" whispered Cagliostro, in a husky tone.

"You shall hear. A foolish bet, which I made when half drunk, compelled me to take a young puppy of an Englishman down to my château, where I kept her, for the notable purpose of estimating her beauty. Having been once idiot enough to make the bet, I thought I could not choose a safer person. The

fellow was like a lump of ice. Goodlooking certainly. His form and features chiselled like the statue of Apollo; but as destitute of life and feeling as the marble of which the statue is composed. He only staid, too, a single day; and yet, would you believe it? this devilish girl grew warm at his sight, and, somehow or other, must have contrived to warm him. I fancy, too, that he must have given her a hint of her real situation, for her manner was certainly changed to myself after his visit. Be that as it may, the cursed bet which I had made—the source of all my misfortunes—compelled me to attack the girl somewhat prematurely. I spare you the recital of the young lady's tragedy starts, and ineffable disdain. She had never seen a play; yet, had she been on a stage for twenty years, she could not have enacted the indignant heroine better. I tried menaces—worse and

worse. At last I used a little gentle violence—don't look so alarmed—it was very trifling—just enough to excuse her own inclinations—that's all. Well—in the most critical moment of our struggle, who should burst in but the cursed priest whom I have before mentioned. Never was anything so inopportune. I felt as though I could have subjected the fellow to every martyrdom described in our legends. I could have broiled him on the gridiron of St. Lawrence,—could have crucified him with his head downwards, like St. Peter. But what do you think I did?—why, nothing at all. Fiends and firebrands! I am ready to go mad, when I think of my folly. I tamely allowed the accursed priest to escort her out of the château. Idiot! idiot! that I was. The priest forwarded the girl to some acquaintance of his at Paris. I followed her, like a hungry lion. By the time I

found her out, she had contrived to earn a living by the sale of drawings and ornamental work. I soon undersold her, and cut off these resources. The woman, too, with whom she lodged, proved accessible to money, and became very manageable. In a word, I had reduced her to the lowest pitch of penury, and was on the point of succeeding, when one night my young lady comes home with a purse full of gold--pays all her debts—and takes herself off the next morning. For some time I lost sight of her; at last I obtained traces of her existence; —and under whose protection do you think I found her living?"

"I—I cannot guess," stammered out Cagliostro, who seemed unusually confused.

"Even under that of the accursed coxcomb whom I was mad enough to have admitted into my château. To give the crowning stroke to

my discomfiture, it was necessary that a miracle should happen—that a stock, a stone, an insensible brute, should become a man. I waited,—and, morbleu! the said miracle did happen. May the wrath of God confound the fellow——"

"Amen!" said Cagliostro, in a deep voice.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the Duke. "That is the first word you have uttered that sounds like sympathy. You looked so gloomy during the story, that I really thought you were taking part with the girl, instead of myself."

"I do not think her exchequer," said Cagliostro, "will enable her bribes to vie with those of the Duke de Fronsac."

"Ah! that is the true principle of action.—Now we understand each other. You have given me proofs of your power—it is marvellous and incomprehensible. I believe that you can achieve any thing within the bounds of human

possibility. Now, mark me. I choose to be foolish, mad, frantic, respecting this girl. Decoy her back to my hôtel—overcome her reluctance—make me her successful suitor,—and I will gorge you with money."

Cagliostro remained silent for some time. At last he said: "I wonder, Duke, that a man of your undaunted courage, and notorious skill at his weapon, did not personally chastise the presumptuous offender."

"Such was my first and natural emotion," replied the Duke; "but, on reflection, though I am no coward, I began to doubt whether the plan would be successful. I have seen him fence, and his proficiency is great—certainly equal to my own. Then his advantage in point of youth would turn the odds fearfully against me. I am afraid I should be foiled, in every sense of the word."

"A nobleman of the land from whence you took this girl, would long ago have put such an impertinent rival under ground," observed Cagliostro.

"Perhaps so," replied the Duke; "but there are limits to every one's roguery. I dislike assassination. It is beyond the line which I will not pass. No—no. Ransack the resources of your fertile brain, my dear Cagliostro.—Give her some love philtre—some of your preparatory draughts. The power to accomplish the task is not wanting, if the inclination be present: of that I am convinced. There are plenty of ways and means. The mystery of her birth renders her open to deception on that point. Introduce yourself to her as the Conte di Volterra. Such I have told her is the name of her family. Pretend to be her father.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Cagliostro, break-

ing into a fit of wild laughter. "Excellent! I will pretend to be her father. Admirable idea! Oh, I think I may pretend to be her father!"

"Not," continued the Duke, "that I would wish to limit your expansive genius to the execution of my own meagre inventions. I only threw out the idea as a suggestion."

"Duke, I thank you for the hint," resumed Cagliostro, with a sort of frantic gaiety. "Yes, I will pretend to be her father."

"Adieu, then, for the present," said the Duke; "when shall I receive news from you?"

"In four days, at the farthest," returned Cagliostro. "Again I thank you for your obliging hint. Yes—I will pretend to be her father."

CHAPTER XXI.

A RELATION DROPPED FROM THE CLOUDS.

One morning, when Cleveland was compelled by business from England to be absent, Antonia was informed by the old woman who lived with her, and superintended her domestic economy, that a strange gentleman earnestly desired to speak with her. Not liking the tone and mystery of the message, and apprehending some fresh machination of the Duke de Fronsac, Antonia intimated that the stranger must either

communicate his business by writing, or defer his visit till a more convenient period. Madame Thibaut, who seemed to have her own reasons for favouring the stranger's entrance, and had probably received in anticipation a douceur for that purpose, endeavoured to alter her mistress's determination; but Antonia was firm. The duenna left the room grumbling, but to the surprise and indignation of Antonia, reappeared the moment afterwards, ushering in the identical stranger, whom she had been instructed to dismiss. She had however no time to scold; for her visitor immediately addressed her. He was a handsome middle-aged man, whose dress indicated that he belonged to the higher orders of society.

"Your name," said he, "is I believe Antonia di Volterra?"

"It is, sir," replied Antonia, who had not

yet prepared a suitable remonstrance on the impropriety of his conduct.

"You were brought up under the protection of the Duke de Fronsac?" pursued he.

"I was, sir, though I cannot understand by what right an entire stranger puts such questions."

"I come on the behalf of your maternal uncle, the Count Orroboni."

"I am not aware," stammered Antonia, confused and agitated, and hardly knowing what to say, "I am not aware of the existence of any such relative."

"Probably not," returned the stranger calmly; "to announce the fact of my friend's relationship, and to explain the reason why you never heard of his name before, formed the object of my visit." So saying he seated himself without invitation opposite to Antonia, on whom he

gazed intently, and began to tell his story with the air of a man who is determined not to depart before he has fulfilled his mission.

"Your father, Mademoiselle, the Conte di Volterra, became obnoxious to the government under which he lived, and only saved his life by a timely flight from its territories. His property was confiscated; and he died a broken-hearted exile. His wife did not long survive him. Her brother, your maternal uncle, was at this time absent from the country. A distant relation, whose name I have not been able to discover, put you out to nurse in the country with certain obscure artizans. Some unknown circumstances suspended his remittances; and the people to whom you were entrusted treated you with cruelty. From this situation you were rescued by the Duke de Fronsac. Do not start—I am aware of the odious motives

by which his apparent generosity was actuated. You owe him no gratitude. About two years ago, your uncle returned to his native country, and learnt for the first time the sad fate of his sister's family. Since that period he has been indefatigable in his endeavours to obtain tidings of his lost niece. About a year ago, I had occasion to travel into France. There was a rumour current in the village where you had been brought up, that you had been carried into that country. When I took my leave of your uncle, he gave me a casket of valuable jewels. 'If' said he, 'you ever meet my niece, make known to her my existence and give her these jewels. They will serve to confirm your romantic story, and may very possibly be of service to her, should she be in want of pecuniary assistance.'" With these words, he put into Antonia's hand an open jewel-case,

the inside of which was blazing with a magnificent set of diamonds. Antonia was painfully perplexed. She had strong reasons for believing the stranger's narrative, wild and extraordinary as it sounded. It tallied with all she knew of her own history. Besides, how could any scheme of imposition be forwarded by transferring the property in such valuable jewels, from himself to her?

A few months ago, the discovery of so near a relation as an uncle, would have filled her with the liveliest joy. From how much misery —from how much error—such a protector would have saved her! Now matters were different. She had made a fatal and irreparable step. She had committed a fault, which the world never forgives in a woman. Of what use was it to recognize the relationship the stranger spoke of. When this Italian nobleman should

discover that she was living with one who was not her husband; he would doubtless repudiate her with contempt and disgust. It was better not to commence a connexion which could not be lasting, and whose termination must be attended with pain. At length Antonia spoke: "I throw no imputations, sir, on the truth of your story, although it is strange that none of these particulars should have ever reached me before. Had the existence of the gentleman whom you affirm to be my uncle, been made known to me some months earlier, I should have hailed with rapture the idea of finding a protector and a relation in the same person. But circumstances have happened, which when they come to the knowledge of the Count Orroboni, will take from him all desire to acknowledge me as his niece."

"The Count Orroboni," replied the stranger,

"is of a mild and forbearing temper, and will know how to discriminate between those faults which are the offspring of a vicious disposition, and those which are the result of an unfortunate situation."

"Enough, sir," said Antonia, who seemed to be writhing beneath the pain which the stranger's allusions inflicted. "Take back the jewels—give, if you will, my best thanks to the Count Orroboni, for that generosity which I am obliged to decline; but believe, me, you will best consult the happiness of both, by never informing him of my existence."

"Permit me to remind you, Mademoiselle," said the stranger, "of the advantages which you would have derived from the connexion."

"I can easily imagine them," hastily answered Antonia; "but my resolution is fixed."

"Let your uncle at least have the consolation

of knowing that you are happy in the position to which you so obstinately adhere. Will you empower me to assure him that you are contented with your lot?"

"Oh yes—yes," said Antonia hurriedly and in a low tone, as if rather speaking to herself than answering the question. "Too much so—too much so. Yes, I am happy—unboundedly happy—happier than I ought to be—far happier than I deserve to be."

"Heaven be praised!" said the stranger, in a voice of deep sympathy. "May your feelings never change. But this is a world in which nothing is fixed or constant."

"Ah, the future!" cried Antonia. "I do not look at that—I am so happy, that I am absorbed by the present. But take back your jewels," added she, for the stranger rose as if with the intention of departing; "I cannot accept the gift."

"They are yours—absolutely yours," returned he. "I have merely held them, until I could find the rightful owner. Fling them away, if you like; but I can neither commit the dishonesty of appropriating them to myself, nor can I insult the original donor by returning them to him."

Antonia would have remonstrated farther, but before she could speak, the stranger had left the room.

A new subject of perplexity now occurred to Antonia; should she relate the stranger's visit and his strange communications to Cleveland? Many considerations induced her to keep them secret. He had of late expressed some uneasiness respecting her future prospects: she felt sure that he would disapprove of her hasty rejection of her uncle's overtures: she dreaded lest he should consult her interests at the expense

of her happiness, and persuade her to live with her uncle. This idea constituted the real motive of her peremptory refusal to negotiate her admission to his family. She shrunk, it is true, from the painful observations that would necessarily be passed on her conduct; but she shrunk still more from the idea of a successful arrangement with her uncle, which would lead to her being received into his house. This plan involved separation from Cleveland; and that——her heart grew sick at the mere possibility of such a misfortune—it was misery worse than death. Another point of doubt with Antonia, was the value of the jewels. She was anxious to ascertain the real worth of these ornaments; because she felt that if these gems were genuine, their ready production and bestowal by the stranger would constitute a very strong argument in favour of the truth of his

narrative. It was exceedingly improbable that one, whose object was extortion or imposition, should consent in the very outset of his plan to the loss of such costly articles. In this difficulty she had recourse to Cleveland, to satisfy her doubts. This step, considering her resolution of secrecy with respect to the transaction with which they were connected, might seem strange and inconsistent to one who was not acquainted with the nature of the feelings which subsisted between Antonia and her lover.

There is a species of love, says Rousseau, so intense as to exclude all possibility of jealousy. Antonia well knew how deeply the confidence and affection of Cleveland were rooted, and felt assured that circumstances a thousand times more suspicious than the present could never shake their stability, or induce him to harbour a thought that was unfavourable to her. Nor

was she deceived;—when she showed him the ornaments, Cleveland much admired their beauty, and assured Antonia, in answer to her questions respecting their value, that the stones were large, genuine, and of the first water. "But," added he, "as the fairy times when people talked jewels have long gone by, and as even such gifted persons as yourself, dearest Antonia, must now be content to utter metaphorical gems; permit me to enquire how you became possessed of such valuable ornaments?"

"That is a secret," replied Antonia, smiling, "you must not ask me—indeed you must not—I cannot tell you at present. Trust me!" continued she, emphatically.

"I will," he replied, with equal emphasis; "and I even thank you for the opportunity you have given me of showing my confidence. Believe me, love, I did not ask from doubt or

suspicion, but from simple curiosity. At your request I banish the feeling, and blow it away from me thus—" added he, playfully suiting the action to the word. "Now it is gone!"

CHAPTER XXII.

PHILOPROGENITIVENESS.

A FEW days after the scene related in the foregoing chapter, the Marchioness de Montolieu received the following letter. It bore neither date, signature, nor postmark. But, alas! the person to whom it was addressed knew only too well the quarter from whence it came, and the subjects to which it alluded.

"I pledged myself not to obtrude upon your attention any token either of my existence or

my attachment. I have kept my word; but it was part of our compact—it was agreed upon between us, on that memorable evening when we last met, that you would endure the ignominy of my correspondence, should I succeed in discovering any traces of that unfortunate being, who was committed, as I have before told you, to the care of an Italian mechanic. Not only am I acquainted with her present situation and residence; but I have been enabled to track all the circumstances of her life, up to the present hour. At the age of ten years she was adopted, or rather purchased from the sordid [illegible] to whom she was entrusted, by a nobleman, who I dare say is well known to you—the Duke de Fronsac. Do not suppose that the act was dictated by benevolence. It was but the first step to a cold, calculated, deliberate scheme of seduction. But however

base and perfidious his motives, his conduct in the first instance conferred upon her that invaluable boon—a good education. True it is, that the rules he prescribed for her guidance were solely calculated to expand the intellect and taste, while they left moral feelings uncultivated. Yet when the reasoning of a young person is early developed, the means of forming a correct judgment upon moral points, is placed within her reach; and, in the absence of any corrupting bias, her natural election will generally be in favour of what is right. In this treacherous, but not unornamented retreat, Antonia (for that is her name) passed several years; during which time she had gradually exchanged the interesting graces of a pretty child for the more exciting charms of womanhood. The period had now arrived when the Duke thought that his past care, foresight, and

forbearance, would reap an ample reward of easy pleasure; but, like many other ingenious people, he overshot the mark at which he aimed. His plans failed from excess of refinement. In endowing his proposed victim with all those mental charms, which he fancied would enhance his anticipated enjoyment, he had rendered her superior to the sordid considerations which animate so many of her sex. She shrunk with natural horror from the idea of selling herself to a man of disproportionate age and uncongenial disposition. Her clear strong sense taught her that favours conferred with an evil intention, which were meant to work mischief rather than benefit to the receiver, could impose no rational ties upon her gratitude. By the assistance and interference of a priest, who frequented the Duke's chateau, she effected a flight to Paris; leaving to the

baffled sensualist the stinging reflection, that the paragon of physical and mental beauty which he had laboured to create, and hoped to appropriate to his own selfish gratification, could only be possessed and enjoyed by those whose intrinsic personal merits rendered them worthy of such a prize. In Paris she endeavoured to maintain herself by her own exertions, and for a time succeeded; but her remorseless persecutor followed her to the capital, surrounded her with his machinations, and soon cut off the slender resources which her ingenuity had discovered. Overwhelmed with the unaccustomed evils of poverty—despairing of all help—she was tempted to apply to her misery that dark and dismal remedy, which constitutes the utmost limits of human punishment for the worst offences. From this melancholy resource, so much grudged by the happier

part of mankind to their unfortunate fellow-creatures, she was saved by the interposition of a young Englishman, named Cleveland. This person, it appears, had been already introduced to Antonia, by her perfidious protector, for the purpose of deciding some licentious bet. He availed himself of this slight acquaintance to offer her the amplest and most liberal relief—a relief which I am bound to say originated in pure and humane motives, and was unshackled by any degrading conditions. What was the unhappy girl to do? Was she to reject gifts proffered with so much delicacy, and persist in her frightful resolution? Alas! she accepted them. You will anticipate the fatal result. Yet I am firmly convinced it was not contemplated or intended by either at the commencement of their acquaintance. His youth, his fine form and handsome countenance, his agreeable man-

ners; the recollection of his frank and disinterested generosity, which was advantageously contrasted with De Fronsac's insidious benefits; the absence of any other object to distract her ideas—all conspired to render him a dangerous companion. The impossibility of finding a suitable match, in point of education and feelings, in the rank of life to which she had sunk, and the want of natural advisers and protectors, must also be considered in her defence. She yielded to the daily, ever renewing temptation, and became his mistress; but it was no base compact; it was no vile exchange of illicit pleasure for a dishonourable subsistence. The best feelings of her nature were unfortunately enlisted against her happiness. Her conscience sounded no alarm. Where was the harm of loving one so young, so amiable, so every way fitted to be an object of attachment? Without

worldly experience, was her simple unassisted reason alone sufficient to resist the delusions of a heated and erring imagination—to unmask the sophistries of passion, or to control the intoxication of love felt for the first time in all its primal energy and strength? The world makes no distinction between the woman who falls the victim of feelings, which under happier circumstances might have proved a blessing and a glory to her, and she who deliberately sacrifices herself to gratify the base desires of avarice and luxury. But can you—can any of your sex at the bottom of their hearts really approve of this cruel injustice? Will you, for this single error, reject her—cast her off—abandon all farther interest in her fate?

"By a singular coincidence, the greater part of the foregoing tale was related to me by its principal and most guilty actor, the Duke de

Fronsac. I also collected much from an old woman who fills the double office of housekeeper and companion to Antonia. If you wish to see her you may gratify your curiosity by an easy method. I ascertained from her duenna that either tomorrow, or the day after, she will call at a mercer's shop to purchase some articles of dress. The time she chooses for such purposes is generally two. I send you a slight sketch of Antonia and of her attendant, in which the colour and fashion of their dress is exactly delineated. With this assistance, if you can manage to enter the shop at the same hour, I think you cannot fail to recognize her. In what manner you will avail yourself of the information which this letter contains — what course you will adopt towards this unfortunate yet interesting girl, I leave to your own feelings to decide. If your views and wishes be at all

within the compass of possibility, need I say what double delight I shall feel in carrying them into execution? I await an exposition of your feelings on the subject. Direct an answer, if you deign any, to Brisseau, Printer and Copper-plate Engraver, 15, Rue de Lesdiguères, Faubourg St. Antoine. Do not trust it to the post; for the police are in the habit of inspecting the letters, and of opening any that excite their suspicion. Go boldly in your carriage to the printing office, and direct your servant to leave the packet, to be altered according to the written instructions contained within."

THE ANSWER TO THE ABOVE.

"Thanks! a thousand thanks to you for your precious yet agitating intelligence. I received the information with fearful pleasure. My heart bounds with joy at the thoughts of seeing

this long lost but not forgotten being; and yet a dim presentiment of evil tells me that I am embarking in a perilous course, of which the issue is dark and menacing, I must look again at your letter. Reject her! cast her off! abandon her! Do you speak these words in mockery and irony; or do you know so little of a mother's heart, as to think she could ever view her own —her only—child with the careless eye, the cold indifference of a stranger? Do you imagine that the mere lapse of some seventeen summers and winters can eradicate the strongest affection of my nature? No; were I placed on a much loftier eminence than I now occupy; and were I to see my daughter a beggar, covered with rags and infamy, shunned, despised, and deserted by all, I would descend from my height, embrace the poor persecuted outcast, take her to my home and bosom,—relieve her misfortunes, or

share her fate. Ay, this and much more would I do, in spite of the scoffs and sneers of the surrounding world. Alas! you little know the desperate fidelity of maternal attachment. But do not be alarmed. I intend to take no step which will in the smallest degree compromise my rank or character; for I can far more effectually serve my child while in the possession of wealth and station, than if I were in her own sad and precarious situation.

I cannot decide anything before I see her—the mere idea throws my spirits into such a flutter of expectation that I cannot seriously bend my thoughts to the consideration of the different schemes for her benefit which suggest themselves to my mind. I cannot rest—I cannot think, until I see her. * * *

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* * * "I have seen her! I have heard her speak! Guided by the instructions contained in your letter, I repaired to the mercer's shop which you said she frequented. I was fortunate enough to meet her accompanied by an old woman who seemed her attendant. How bright and beautiful she looked! She gave some trifling order to the shopman—the tones of her voice thrilled through my heart. Oh! that I could have strained her to my bosom and called her child—darling—my own Antonia! I would have given worlds for a single embrace. I would have knelt to any one who would have supplied me with an excuse for speaking to her. I strove to address her but in vain, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth—my voice died away in my throat—I was forced to suppress my feelings, and speak to the officious shopman, who had brought me

some silks to inspect. By way of gaining time, I told him, without looking at them, that those were not the articles I wanted. At the sound of my voice she turned round and looked at me. Yes, I felt her soft eloquent eyes turned on me —on me her mother, with the indifferent gaze of a stranger—I wonder I did not faint. After a momentary glance she walked out of the shop. Alas ! I could not detain her ; and the beautiful vision vanished from my eager eyes. So long as she was present, I was absorbed in the contemplation of her charms. I could think of nothing but her unrivalled loveliness ; but when she had departed, I recollected your fatal account of her present condition. Oh God ! This was what I foreboded ! My worst fears are realized ! As far as I am concerned, this bitter and terrible blow may be retribution. I could endure my own agony in silent submission.

But alas! the worst part of this misery will fall on Antonia. She is doomed to expiate in her own person the crimes of her parents. The fault was not her's, poor child! but upon her will fall the punishment of society—the pain, the sorrow and shame, which sooner or later must overtake every woman who violates its laws. But this must not be—we must prevent this terrible injustice—we must indeed, my dear friend—yes, I will call you friend—preserver—benefactor—anything—if you will but exert your powers to save my Antonia from her impending fate. She cannot be depraved! It is impossible! those beautiful eyes were full of goodness—there was an air of purity in her face that could not be mistaken--her whole deportment, too, was indicative of modesty and proper feelings. No! no! she is the victim of circumstances—you said so yourself. How

shall we break off this odious connexion? You tell me that she appears enthusiastically attached to this young Englishman. It is dreadful to think that her young affections should be thus wasted! Unhappy delusion! Miserable infatuation! What a mockery is it in a man to talk of love, while he is irreparably injuring a woman in the estimation of her fellow-creatures, and preparing for her future years of misery and disgrace. He has it in his power, by marriage, to make her happy and respected. He deliberately refuses to take that step, and yet has the shameless hypocrisy, the disgusting effrontery, to swear that he loves her. How loves?—why as the vermin loves the fruit it feeds on and destroys. Such a man may dote on her complexion—may adore the symmetry of her fair form—but he is surely not in love; or if he is, it is with his own passion, and not

with the pretended object of his affection. The Count D'Ostalis has promised to introduce him to me this evening. I am all anxiety to see and converse with this destroyer of my hopes, and to form some estimate of his character. I hear he has obtained the soubriquet of the English poco-curante, from his coldness and indifference; but Count D'Ostalis tells me that he has much changed of late.

"You may perhaps smile at the ardour of my attachment for a being of whom I have seen and known so little. Not one man in a hundred can comprehend the feelings of woman on that subject. I have always passionately desired to have offspring. I never saw a beggar press her infant to her bosom, but I could have cried from very despair at my want of children. I felt as if I could willingly have exchanged my childless rank and splendour, for her rags and

poverty, accompanied by so sweet a consolation. Joyfully, indeed, would I have sacrificed the hollow and insipid pleasures of society, for the felicity of possessing a little cherub, attached to me by that nameless spell implied in the word 'my own.' Alas! I am well assured, from the unsatisfied and craving longings of maternity which are alive within me, although not from experience, that there is no purer or more exquisite pleasure in life, than a mother's rapture as she bends over her sleeping infant. Long ago, I should have adopted a child, but the Marquis, indifferent as he is to my proceedings in other respects, absolutely opposed himself to this step. Conceive then my agitation, after long years of deferred hope, to find my own—my long-lost child, in the prime of her youth—lovely—amiable—accomplished—all that could have fitted her to be the dearest of friends, as

well as the most loved of children—to find her all this, and the prey of a libertine. Oh God! my brain whirls round and verges on insanity, when I think on this, and reflect that I am the cause. * * * * *

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"Yesterday I went to a soirée where Monsieur Cleveland was expected to be present. D'Ostalis had promised to introduce him to me, but he did not arrive for some time after the other, so I had ample leisure to contemplate this pernicious Englishman before I formed his acquaintance. His person is finely formed, and his countenance handsome and intelligent; but it is pervaded by an air of dissatisfaction and melancholy, which rather impairs the effect that his very pleasing features would otherwise produce. However, when he smiles or grows animated in conversation, I must confess his

physiognomy becomes very agreeable. As soon as I had concluded these reflections, D'Ostalis made his appearance, and brought Monsieur Cleveland up to me. What a strange sensation I experienced when I first began to talk to him. In fact, mine was an extraordinary position. Here was I, with my aching heart and heavy spirits, smiling and bowing to the cause of my misery, and talking calmly, politely, and graciously, to the man who was the seducer of my daughter!

"Our conversation was at first flat and uninteresting enough. We confined ourselves to the hackneyed insipid topics of the day on which strangers usually discourse. At last Count D'Ostalis addressed to me some *fade* flowery compliments on the irresistible influence of female charms.

"I was thinking of Antonia at the moment,

and in the fulness and bitterness of my heart I answered, 'that it was indeed customary for men to address women, more especially when they were young and handsome, in a tone of affected deference and softness, which they do not use to their own sex; but that the use of this hypocritical style did not prevent women from being treated, on certain occasions, both by laws and individuals, with the utmost barbarity and cruelty; and that, in return for these idle, unmeaning, unfelt, demonstrations of respect, they deprived us of all power of independence and free action. 'I appeal to your decision, Monsieur Cleveland, to pronounce whose opinions on this subject are justest—mine or Count D'Ostalis's?'

"'I think,' replied he, 'that the complaint of Madame la Marquise is well founded. The common language of men to women is very

insincere and deceitful. Look at their acts; examine the laws of even civilized countries. It is easy to see who were the legislators, and for whose benefit they legislated. That which is considered as a jest—nay, as an amiable frailty, in a man's conduct, is visited on the woman in many places with death, in others with perpetual imprisonment, in others with infamy, and in all with ruin. In the regulation of her conduct, she is considered a free agent and punished accordingly; in the regulation of her property, she is deemed a child, or an idiot; and except in particular cases, the disposition and power over it is transferred to her husband.'

"I have always felt strongly on these points; and I was both surprised and pleased, when I heard Monsieur Clevelánd give utterance to such sentiments; but before I could reply, D'Ostalis, who had been listening to him with extreme impatience, broke in.

" 'I admit,' said he, 'that women are restricted to a small share of legal and recognized power, but look at the immense extent of their secret underhand influence throughout the whole of society. Nothing is more different than law and fact. By the French law of succession, women are excluded from the throne, and yet who during the last century have been the real sovereigns of France? Louis the Fourteenth, Louis the Fifteenth, Louis the Sixteenth? or Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Pompadour, and Marie Antoinette?'

" I made no answer, for I wished to hear Cleveland speak. He quickly answered: 'The unavowed and illegitimate influence, attained by a few individuals, argues nothing in favour of female happiness, and does not improve the general condition of the sex. On the contrary, the facts you adduce, are only a melancholy example, that cut off from legitimate means of

obtaining power and wealth, they are apt to prostitute that beauty and those feelings, which were intended as the source of purest happiness to themselves and others, to the gratifications of ambition and avarice.'

"Count D'Ostalis took snuff, and either had no answer ready, or did not wish to continue the discussion. I intently regarded Cleveland. He was plunged in a reverie; his eyes were fixed on vacancy. What was the subject of his thoughts? Was conscience suggesting the discrepancy between his theoretical sentiments and his practical conduct? Could it be that this man, who saw with such clearness, and avowed with such frankness and candour, what so few of his sex have honesty enough to confess—could he be the seducer of my Antonia? Was this generous courage on the weaker side, this earnestness in favour of unpopular truth,

compatible with unworthy acts? I broke the silence by exclaiming, 'what a charming thing it would be, if all the professors and utterers of fine sentiments and noble principles, actually carried them into practice. France would then be Utopia— Paradise.'

"'Do you impute insincerity to my opinions?' asked Cleveland, with a smile.

"'No,' said I, 'I believe you speak as you think; but though you recognize the truth as a mere matter of speculation, there is a guilty expression in your face, which tells me that you have as little inclination as any other man to adopt it as your rule of action."

"'Ah, Madame!' cried D'Ostalis, 'your last remark excites my liveliest admiration. The secrets of friendship ought to be inviolable, I will never betray them, or else I could bring such evidence against my excellent and amiable

friend, Monsieur Cleveland, as would amply bear out your opinion, that he is only rougher and ruder than other men, and not a bit more honest.'

"'If my love of truth,' rejoined Cleveland, 'leads me now and then to whisper it in a friend's ear, I have no desire to fall a martyr to abstract principles. Believe me, no man, whatever be his natural disposition, can ever be much in advance of his fellow-creatures in practical virtues. They will soon stop his progress. Conceive some enlightened reformer in Turkey giving liberty to his wives—throwing open their prison doors, and entertaining mixed parties in the harem. What would be the result—partial or general imitation? No! His friends and contemporaries would think, and call him a beast; his wives would soon abuse his indulgence, and then plead his insane and unseemly conduct as an excuse;

and finally a virtuous and indignant populace would tear him to pieces.'

"The true meaning of this speech I considered to be, that his own inclinations would prompt him to do justice to Antonia; but that his dread of the world's censure withheld him from executing his generous intentions. Such at least was the interpretation my maternal partiality drew from his words. I much wished to have continued the subject; nor do I think that Cleveland was averse to its discussion: but Count D'Ostalis taking advantage of the pause, burst into an elaborate description and criticism of a young debutante, who had made her first appearance, the preceding night, at the Théâtre Français. When he had finished, I found it impossible to renew our former subject; and the conversation permanently subsided into fashionable small talk.

" The more I see of Cleveland, the better I like him; the easier I find excuses for Antonia. I cannot imagine how he acquired the nickname of 'poco-curante.' To me he appears to possess much greater depth and seriousness of feeling, than the majority of those who affect to fix upon him that appellation. But everybody agrees in saying that his character and manners have of late sustained great alteration. Can this change proceed from his acquaintance with Antonia? Oh! that I dared think so!

" I have been weighing and meditating, with all the force of thought that I am capable of exerting, whether it is probable that Cleveland will ever marry Antonia; and I have arrived at the bitter conclusion, that the hope of that event is extremely small. Supposing, then, my forebodings to be true, it is evident we cannot better serve Antonia, than by inducing her to

renounce her present rash and fatal connexion. No doubt the effort will at first cost her much pain; but this will pass away, and be succeeded by a peace of mind which she cannot know at present. A few hours of temporary grief, which time and occupation will soon alleviate, are well endured, if they purchase her exemption from future years of irreparable misery. For how can those be permanently happy who have forfeited, whether justly or unjustly, the respect of their fellow-creatures?

" A plan has occurred to me, which, if you think it capable of being realized, would afford Antonia a safe and honourable asylum, while it allowed me to enjoy the constant pleasure of her company. Suppose I introduced her into my house as a relation—say a niece. I am certain my husband would make no objection to the proposition; for with him a handsome guest is

always acceptable, especially of the fair sex. If we did not betray ourselves, there are only two persons in the world who could detect the imposture, Cleveland and De Fronsac. The first is too generous to betray anybody, even if he had the opportunity; and the other exclusively divides his time between Paris and his own abominable country residence; while I should confine myself to our château at Veret, which he is as little likely to visit as Nôtre Dame when high mass is being performed. Even if he should accept one of my husband's invitations—a thing he has never done yet—I should have previous notice of his visit, and could send Antonia out of the way until he had left us.

No doubt you will be surprised to find me proposing a scheme of fraud and imposture, which involves the constant necessity of deception and dissimulation. I feel that my plan

deserves all these names; yet thus much will I say in my apology,—it harms no single human being, either directly or indirectly; while, on the other hand, it rescues a lovely and amiable girl from the dangers to which beauty and poverty are naturally exposed, and restores a beloved daughter to the aching bosom of her mother. All the effects are not only harmless, but highly beneficial; still I am conscious that the general consequences of deception and trickery are bad; and that a pure and upright mind revolts from all imposture, no matter what shape it takes, or by what excuses it is defended. How wretched is the necessity which drives me to an expedient so repugnant to my natural disposition. Yet the gratification of my maternal feelings has now become a necessity. Ever since I saw her, I have allowed myself to dwell upon her image—to clasp her in imaginary em-

braces—to picture to my mind the delight of daily seeing her, of living with her, hearing her, and interchanging my thoughts and feelings with her; until exasperated with the illusive excitement, my desire to regain my child has become so violent, as to deprive me of all repose, and incapacitate me for all occupation. It haunts and pervades me like a feverish thirst, which I cannot slake. If I may not have my daughter's society—if this first and most natural right and pleasure is denied, my existence is unendurable. I feel that death or gratification are my only alternatives!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

AMATORY REFRIGERATION.

The saddest lesson which experience teaches man, is a knowledge of the true nature of love. It is in vain that the whole course of tale and history assures us of the evanescent, transitory character of this passion—it is in vain that our own observation confirms the truth, and shows us that the sensation is as brief as it is delightful. What man, in love for the first time, could ever be induced to believe, that the delicious sentiment, which absorbs or excludes

every other feeling of his bosom, must sooner or later die a natural death, and be extinguished in its own gratification? True, it may be succeeded by a tender and affectionate attachment, by firm and lasting friendship; but the glory —the enthusiasm—the celestial exaltation of true passion, when it first overcomes us, must pass away. How ridiculous, then, to abuse men for their want of constancy. Could we command our affections, who would cease to love? who would throw away the treasure which constitutes his happiness, and which he values more than all the riches of the world? It is in spite of ourselves—in spite of our utmost efforts to recall our first enthusiasm, that we gradually begin to view the once loved face with indifference, and to feel that her society has no longer a spell for our disenchanted minds. To love is to be blest, and who, that found himself in Eden,

would voluntarily leave it? It is customary to talk, as if the inconstant man made a selfish gain by his change of sentiment; but what can he profit by the decay of the sweetest sentiment of our nature? As well rail at the capitalist, because he gets rid of his depreciated securities. Alas! it is with a heavy heart that he parts with bonds, once the representatives of thousands, for a fraction of their original value. But it is with a far profounder sentiment of despair, that the man of reflection perceives his warmest and most cherished feelings will not abide the withering touch of time and custom; and that the love he fondly deemed eternal, has hardly the durability of an Autumn flower.

It is the law of our nature that all passive impressions shall become weaker by repetition, and in process of time be entirely effaced. The

effect which a beautiful woman produces on a man's mind, shares the general fate of all involuntary emotions; and the latter can no more prevent the flight of his love, than he can the departure of his youth, health, strength, or any other blessing. Cleveland's passion had not yet reached that fated period; still it cannot be denied that the intensity of his attachment had begun to diminish. His mind was no longer absorbed by the single idea of love. He could think and speak to Antonia of other things than his passion; nay, he could even read a book in her presence without much distraction. It was with deep dismay that Antonia perceived these symptoms of subsiding passion. Her own feelings remained in all their original force; and it seemed unnatural and cruel in him not to return them. She had no fears that he would desert her, in the vulgar sense of the term; but

she dreaded the time might soon arrive when Cleveland would continue the connexion rather from a sense of honour and generosity than from love. In this frame of mind, she was disposed to consider the overtures and remonstrances with which her diamond-giving visitor still pursued her, with more attention than she had hitherto bestowed on them. He had not sought to renew his personal acquaintance with her; he had refrained from all attempts to gain a second interview. He seemed to content himself with forcing a copious correspondence on her attention. Some of the letters contained matter relative to herself of such an extraordinary nature, that natural curiosity compelled her to read the epistles. The main object of the writer appeared to be to induce her to leave Cleveland; and to live under the protection of a lady of high rank, whom he asserted to be

her mother. To the truth and justice of some of the arguments, by which he enforced his solicitations, Antonia could not refuse her assent. Her unknown correspondent confesses to her in his letters, that the story he had related to her on the occasion of their personal interview was a mere fabrication. He thus justifies the deceit:

"The real events of your history are so wild and extraordinary, that I knew you would at once reject them, as incredible. I was therefore obliged to prepare your mind by a fiction, before I could hazard the revelation of actual facts. I was forced to gain credit for improbable truths, by a prefatory string of plausible falsehoods. Yes, it is true that you are the daughter of a woman of rank, now moving in the highest society of Paris — celebrated in those brilliant circles for her wit and beauty, but not less distinguished for the amiable quali-

ties of her disposition. It is equally true, that this lady, who possesses no children by marriage, is aware of your existence. It is not less true that she takes the liveliest interest in your welfare, and that she is willing to run any risk, and encounter any danger, in order to enjoy the pleasure of unrestrained intercourse with you. The objection, therefore, which you urged against your return to your relations, loses its weight. The lady, who I hope will be your future protectress, will not be likely to blame you for the misfortunes which sprung from her own neglect. She proposes that you should live with her at her country château, in the character of niece. If you will consent to this, I will make such an arrangement as will preclude all danger of discovery. In fact, from whom have you to dread detection but the Duke de Fronsac? Now, as long as you remain unmar-

ried, it is not necessary that you should mingle in Parisian society, the only place where you are likely to meet with De Fronsac. I will give you proofs of the truth of my present story, that will banish every suspicion from your mind; I will reveal to you the name of this lady. She goes frequently to the Italian Opera. Get Cleveland to point her out to you; he knows her well. You shall have an interview with her. The only real obstacle which exists to this plan, is your infatuated attachment for that Englishman. Now, granting all that you can assert respecting the sincerity and strength of his passion, how long can you hope to retain his affection? He is the most fastidious discontented mortal that I ever encountered. He is already tired of every thing. He professes himself indifferent to those prizes which are objects of the fiercest dispute to common men.

He has grown weary of pleasure, riches, admiration, power, even of life itself. And yet you are weak enough to fancy that this strange freak of affection, which, for want of other idleness, he now indulges towards you, will be lasting, will be eternal. Can you for a moment allow yourself to believe, that this man, so easily affected with disgust and satiety, who before he is thirty has found time to grow sick of every thing in life, should change his nature when he approaches you, and prove a miracle of uniform constancy? When he ceases to love you—and it is wonderful, considering his character, that his passion has lasted so long—what will be your position? I do not allude to pecuniary distress. Cleveland is rich, generous; and I dare say would never allow one, who had been even the temporary object of his affections, to lack support. He will give you

money; I doubt it not: but will this be sufficient? Will he give you, as now, his time and society? To whom will you then turn for consolation and sympathy? In your present situation, you forfeit the deference and respect of our sex, and the good-will and kindness of your own. Society is at war with you; and will never grant you peace, or allow you to rest. No matter what may be the absolute guilt or innocence of your present connexion; it violates the world's law, and is therefore in the eyes of the world the greatest of crimes. If you would live happily with your fellow-creatures, you must conform to their rules and customs—or prejudices and absurdities, if you will. The boldest and cleverest of men never opposed society single-handed with success; for a woman to brave the conflict, is, indeed, madness.

" I offer you a new career—oblivion for the past, and a prospect of passing your future life among that class of society, for which you are so well fitted both by nature and education. Can you reject this proposal? In spite of the warmth and liveliness of your feelings, I know that you sometimes reflect; that you sometimes calmly consider what is best for your own and others' happiness. Think deliberately on what I have urged—on what I offer. You must ultimately accede to my overtures. It is not in human nature to refuse such manifest advantages.

" But say that my opinions respecting the transitory nature of love are exaggerated—are absolutely false—or grant that your lover is an exception to the universal rule. Think, as a thousand infatuated girls before you have dared to think, that for you man's nature is reversed.

Dream, if you will, that a heart, more uncertain than the winds, and more unstable than the waves, has for you become fixed and constant. Is love alone, and by itself, a sufficient compensation for the loss of every other comfort and pleasure in life? Have you no other sentiments, passions, wants and feelings, to be gratified, but this one? Alas! love is but one out of a host as numerous as that of Xerxes. Existence is composed of a thousand petty amusements—a thousand trivial occupations—a thousand small duties. At any one of these taken by itself you may individually smile; but on the aggregate depends your happiness. Love is the wine of life; we prize the racy intoxicating beverage far beyond the simple food which supports existence: but ask yourself in sober calmness, which is the most important?—with which can you easiest dispense? Reflect on

the position in which you are now placed - view it on every side—examine it in every light. Look beneath the surface—extend your glance beyond the present. Be not dazzled with the sunshine that now streams from your lover's eyes; for the night cometh, and quickly—the long dark night of infamy and misery. You are wholly and solely dependent, as no human being should be, on the caprice of a single individual, and if he fails you—ay, the thought is fearful—you have but one plank between you and the abyss: that lost, you sink deeper than plummet ever sounded. You have but one star to guide you: that quenched, what shall direct your course? You have but one source of joy, hope, pleasure, respectability, amusement, goodness: and that dried up, whence shall the daily current of your being flow?" * * *

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Such were the forcible and energetic communications which were constantly forwarded to Antonia from her unknown correspondent. It is not to be supposed that they were perused without effect. The perpetual repetition of opinions, even when they are opposed to our own, at last makes a considerable impression on our mind; and sometimes we concede to reiteration and importunity, what we would not have yielded to reason. But the sentiments expressed in the preceding extracts corresponded only too well with the fears and doubts that were fermenting at the bottom of Antonia's heart. She viewed every art and gesture of Cleveland with microscopic eyes. There was in truth a slight alteration in his manner. The first effervescence of his passion had subsided; and his demeanour and his spirits had become more equable. This comparative composure of manner

was magnified by Antonia into downright indifference. Mere trifles—molehills invisible to the sight of common people, became mountains to the jealous glance of love. At these times, the letters of the unknown correspondent were sometimes recurred to as a sad consolation. They were perused and reperused with increasing attention. However bitter was the idea of separation from Cleveland, she was now fully convinced of the possibility of such an occurrence. The overtures contained in the letters at all events presented an alternative. By degrees she conceived the thought of answering these strange communications. The idea soon grew familiar to her mind; it no longer terrified her; and at last she put it into execution. She entreated to know the name of the lady who had been alluded to as her mother. After a time it was communicated, but accom-

panied with the most fearful and terrible injunctions of secrecy. She was farther informed that the Marchioness de Montolieu would be present in her customary box at the Italian Opera on a particular night.

Cleveland was intently examining a portfolio of fine engravings, to which he had been making some additions. Antonia was ostensibly engaged with the same amusement, but alas! her eyes were oftener fastened on her lover's countenance than on the prints beneath. "Oh that I could look under that fair brow," thought she, "and see what is passing in the busy brain within."

"Have you no criticism to make, Antonia, on the new engravings which I have brought you?" said Cleveland, without looking up.

Antonia repressed the exclamation that rose to her lips. She forbore to tell him that she had been too much occupied with gazing on

him, to notice the additions to the portfolio. Her exquisite tact enabled her to see that the moment was unseasonable; and that a display of tenderness, which he might be unable to return, would only embarrass and distress her lover.

"I am musically inclined to-night," said Antonia; "let us go to the Italian Opera."

"Are you serious, dearest?" said Cleveland.

"Is there anything extraordinary in my wish?" asked Antonia.

"Oh! nothing," replied Cleveland; "only you yourself requested me to procure these engravings, and now I have brought them, you will not turn your eyes on them."

"Be it so," said Antonia; "are men to monopolize the pleasures of fickleness?"

"By no means," said Cleveland, smiling, "you shall have your share of the pleasure, if

you call an infirmity by that name. You shall be as fickle as you like, and you shall go to the opera if you like."

In a short time they were seated in a box at the opera. Antonia's first care was to find out the Marchioness de Montolieu. She saw a lady, still in the prime of life and beauty, sitting in the box which had been designated to her beforehand, as the seat which the Marchioness would choose on the night in question. A thrill of agitation pervaded Antonia's frame. Could that fair being, so young—so bright, be her mother? The ideas of age and maternity were indissolubly connected in her mind; she knew not why. She wished to be sure that she was not mistaken, and turning to Cleveland, she asked him, if he knew the name of the lady sitting in the opposite box.

"The Marchioness de Montolieu," returned

Cleveland; "and now you put me in mind of an observation, which struck me the other day in her company, that you resembled her so strongly in voice, feature, and manner, that you must somehow or other be related."

Antonia's heart beat with a variety of emotions. "Are you intimately acquainted with her?" asked she.

"I have only lately been introduced to her, but I have every possible inclination to improve our friendship."

"Why?" asked Antonia faintly.

"Oh! I hardly know why—because she is very agreable and very handsome—because she is so like you, dearest, both in body and mind."

Antonia's countenance brightened—so great a luxury is the simplest, idlest compliment from the lips we love. She would never leave him, no—not to be recognized as the daughter of

the first noble in the land. She could not however help gazing on the Marchioness. Her countenance seemed melancholy and absorbed. She paid but little attention to the conversation of the gentleman who was the fellow-occupant of the box, and still less to the performance on the stage. Her thoughts seemed far away. Could it be, that she was pining for the unnatural daughter, who had just resolved never to seek her protection, or meet her affection? And then she looked on Cleveland. Lover and mother! why would not fate allow her to enjoy them both? Must fortune never come with both hands full?

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SEPARATION, WITH STRANGE REASONS FOR IT.

As LONG as we love, says Rochefoucault, we pardon. What a deep knowledge of human nature is evinced in this little aphorism! We overlook all faults in those we love—we dote upon their very imperfections and frailties, and view them as the breaks and chasms in a landscape—defects perhaps in themselves, but increasing the beauty of the whole. No ill-usage disgusts us. We receive their bad treatment,

as a devotee resigns himself to the misfortunes which he believes to be the chastenings of his Deity. We make a merit in suffering for them. We experience an actual pleasure in our pain, when their hand inflicts the wound. In proportion as Antonia perceived Cleveland's love to decline, the stronger grew her own passion. And yet in spite of this infatuation, she had already determined to part from him for ever. Day after day, she watched his manners grow colder—his looks become less fond, and his voice less soft and mellifluous; yet to do him justice, she confessed that his behaviour never changed. He was as anxious as ever to supply her with pleasure and amusement. His liberality was as unbounded as at first. But what availed these acts of kindness? The symptoms of declining love were not to be mistaken by a person of Antonia's penetration. She saw too

clearly, that they foreboded the ultimate extinction of his attachment. The thought was agony, yet how could she arrest what appeared the natural progress of things? How could she prevent the fatal period, when he would cease to love her, from arriving. She had but one resource; there was but one means of avoiding this detested moment. It was to part from him now—at the present time, while the last remains of attachment were still alive in his bosom.

"You will have to dine by yourself, to-day, Antonia," said Cleveland one morning, as he had just finished his preparations for going out. "I shall be particularly engaged till night. Adieu."

"Adieu," replied Antonia, but what a difference between the two 'adieux.' The first came trippingly off the speaker's tongue, in the

careless placid tone, in which we bid a friend good-bye, whom we expect to meet again in a few days, or perhaps hours; and whose absence we could bear with equanimity for a much longer period. The second was uttered in a tone of deep emotion. There was a seriousness and solemnity in the sound, which did not belong to common parlance. There was also a slight tremulousness in the voice, as if the speaker could hardly pronounce the word, and with difficulty suppressed the agitated feelings that were struggling to escape from her full bosom. Cleveland was so struck with the expression which she gave to this ordinary and yet affecting form of speech, that he closed the half-opened door of the apartment, and turning round, looked at her in some surprise. Antonia returned the glance with a far more intense gaze. At length, apparently unable to stifle

her contending emotions, she darted forwards, and flinging her arms round his neck, burst into a passionate flood of tears.

Cleveland was embarrassed, not to say annoyed, by this strange display of tenderness and passion. He did not like to treat such warmth of feeling with cold indifference; yet he felt himself unable either to understand, or to reciprocate its fervour. He was moreover pained to observe such a strong proof of internal sorrow and secret uneasiness. He felt, in short, like the cool and placid Hume, when the frantic enthusiast Jean Jacques Rousseau, from some reaction of feeling towards the former gentleman, suddenly fell upon his neck and wept: 'Gently, gently, my dear sir,' said Hume, patting the other on the back. This was all that the astonished philosopher could do towards soothing the passionate old child of fifty years.

Equally ineffective consolation was administered to Antonia by Cleveland—he pressed her to his bosom—begged her to be calm—wondered what could have happened to distress her in this extraordinary manner—was sure she was ill—begged her to have advice, &c. &c.—Antonia wept on in an uncontrollable passion of grief. Cleveland grew tired and vexed at the continuance of the scene, and at last made a gesture of weariness—perhaps of impatience. Antonia instantly withdrew herself from his arms, but apparently more in sorrow than in anger.

"If you know how much pain," said Cleveland, "this unevenness of temper causes me, I am certain you would not yield to your feelings in this manner."

"Forgive me," said Antonia.

"Forgive you! Nay I must be the person

who has offended—and yet I am not conscious of having disobliged you."

"Alas! you cannot offend me; though you may occasion me much pain; but say that you forgive me this weakness, and that we part friends," said Antonia.

"Considering the shortness of the period during which we shall be separated," replied Cleveland, smiling, "I should have thought it hardly necessary to take such a solemn and formal farewell; but I am willing to humour your weakness, though perhaps it would be more friendly to deny you. I cannot forgive you, because I was never offended, but only grieved to see your spirits so uneven. We certainly however part friends, and something more than friends; I trust and hope we shall meet again in a gayer and happier mood."

Antonia was silent. The tears still stood in

her eyes. Cleveland approached her, and gently kissed them away. She remained mute and passive under his caresses—and so they parted.

On his return home Cleveland found that Antonia had gone out, and was not yet returned. As the hour was late he was a good deal surprized, and a little alarmed. On making enquiries, he was informed that she had left home about two hours after himself, and that she had spent the interval in writing.

"Did she not leave word when she would return?" demanded Cleveland of the old woman, whom we have before mentioned.

"No, sir, but she cried very much as she got into her fiacre. 'Your trunks, miss,' said I, 'are quite safe——'"

"Trunks!" exclaimed Cleveland, stamping furiously. "Did she take anything away with her?"

"Oh Lord, sir!" cried the old woman, "I'm sure I thought she had got your leave, or I should not have permitted her."

Cleveland struck his forehead in anguish and despair.

"The gentleman who was seemed very kind," sagaciously obser ..e old woman, who in her frightened stupidity kept talking on, in hopes that she should at last say something to please.

"She must be deceived—trepanned," cried Cleveland. "I will instantly go to the police. (The idea of infidelity never struck his mind.) But stop—you say she wrote something. Where is it?—in her room perhaps. I will go and see;" and he rushed with the energy of a madman into the apartment where Antonia had slept. The first object that met his eyes was a letter on the toilette table directed to himself,

and in her handwriting. He tore it open and read it through, without moving from the spot, or changing the position in which he stood. The following were the contents :—

"I dote on you—I adore you. Your beloved image seems to pervade my whole existence. I dream of you all night—I think of you all day. My heart—my soul—my brain—nay, every nerve and fibre of my frame is instinct with love for you. I could worship the very ground you tread upon. I could shed my heart's blood—I could drain the pulses that throb so wildly for you, drop by drop, to give you an hour's pleasure—to save you an hour's pain. All other passions, thoughts, emotions and sentiments, are swallowed up in this one master-feeling. I love you beyond all measure or limit—I love you fondly—impiously—I love

you to distraction,—and therefore I leave you for ever.

Hear me, dearest Cleveland; I could bear to see you—Cleveland—my all of love, hope, and happiness — stretched in death at my feet. Yes, I could bear to see the face and form, now so pregnant with grace, strength, and beauty—reft of its divine spark, and lying an unconscious and pulseless corse before me. I could behold this sight and survive, because the recollection of your love would enable me to endure life. But to perceive that glorious and ineffable passion—which once shone around and about me, like the meridian sun, filling all life with such radiance, that my senses ached with excess of light—dwindle into a common vulgar sentiment—a mere household attachment —the result of habit and convenience; and perhaps to feel it shrink to something less than this ;—to view the last rays of waning passion

depart from me with the slow but sure motion of the dial's hour hand; I, gazing on them the while, like a shipwrecked mariner watching the sun go down, which will cut off all chance of escape or succour—nerveless, hopeless, helpless, powerless. No, no, rather let me die a thousand deaths than undergo such intolerable and protracted tortures. Yet too surely I feel that this will be the result if we live together much longer. Day by day—hour by hour—minute by minute—your love is decaying. Its fashion and form are the same now as at first; but soul, life and energy, are ebbing fast. You are unconscious perhaps of the change, or you perceive it, and battle against the natural progress of your feelings with your utmost efforts. In vain; these painful struggles, these useless wrestlings with your own nature, will but accelerate the fatal period. Let us part then, my beloved—let us

part while we still love—ere life is infected by the poisonous truth, that our passion, like every other hope and pleasure, is vanity and delusion of spirit. Leave the feast while the immortal nectar of enjoyment, still glows upon our lips; do not wait to drain the dregs of satiety and indifference—rather dash the goblet, precious though it be, into a thousand pieces.

"Do not mourn for me; I am content with my fate. The Calendar says that we have passed but a few brief months together; but to me the time seems like a succession of happy ages, so lengthened out is the period by the countless sensations that are crowded into it. Yes, I have lived an eternity of bliss; and its memories, which are worth all other pleasures, will accompany me to the last moments of my existence. They are sufficient for felicity; I am content; I am happy. Entertain no anxiety

for my future fate. What the world would call my true interests, are advanced and strengthened by the step I have taken. I shall gain in respectability, and station in society, something of what I lose in peace and happiness. Should I be deceived in these expectations, I shall be but little affected. Henceforward good or bad fortune is the same to me. I can feel neither joy nor sorrow after losing you. Forgive me that I parted at once, without apprizing you of my intention. I examined my resolution and found it unequal to the task. The sudden and sharp separation, which cleaves the bosom like an axe, is woe enough to bear. To have my heartstrings slowly drawn asunder, by the protracted agonies of a formal parting, is more than I could endure.'

"I have still a thousand feelings to explain—a thousand wishes to unfold; and this letter

may perhaps be the last I shall ever write to you. But my brain is confused and weak. I am unable to avail myself of the opportunity. The multiplicity of my eager thoughts overwhelms my understanding. My eyes are misty —hardly can I trace the incoherent words I write. Farewell—I can say no more. Your own heart will tell you how much is felt, wished, and conveyed, in that simple word. Farewell, my beloved—my adored Cleveland. Farewell —farewell!

"ANTONIA."

For some minutes after he had perused the letter, Cleveland stood in a sort of stupified dismay. Was he dreaming?—did he read the letter aright?—Gone!—and for ever. This was a blow he had not anticipated. Perhaps she would return. With a beating heart he again

read her farewell epistle. No—no—there was no hope—she had left him in right good earnest, and for ever. Her resolution was the result of his own conduct: there was no one he could blame—no one on whom he could vent his fury—no one who could afford him the slightest assistance, sympathy, or consolation. He threw himself on a chair, and wept like a child in utter weakness. To know the worth of a thing, we must lose it.

> "For it so falls out,
> That what we have, we prize not to the worth;
> But being lacked and lost, why then we rack
> The value."

It seemed to Cleveland as if he had for the first time become sensible of Antonia's charms and virtues—as if he had for the first time become aware of the desperate and absorbing nature of his passion for her. Compared with

the intensity of his present emotions, he certainly had never felt love before. Then came the overwhelming flood of regrets and self-reproaches, which we all feel too late, when we lose the friend whose kindness we have abused. Was it possible he had been living months in her society, and deemed the privilege of so little value? Madman!—idiot! Now he would sacrifice his whole fortune—his health—his life—to redeem five minutes of those wasted and ill-appreciated hours of bliss. In the stupid wantonness of security and content, he had trampled on the boon that made his happiness; and fate had deservedly wrenched away the blessing. Oh that he could see her once more—only once more—though it were to bid her an eternal adieu. It was denied him. His head grew dizzy. His senses for a moment deserted him—he became delirious with agony—he

shouted aloud Antonia's name, as if expecting her to answer. He called first with frantic eagerness—then in a soft imploring tone. The loved and familiar voice responded not to his cry—the well-known face of beauty came not forth to meet him. Cleveland gazed slowly and fearfully round the solitary room, and felt that he was alone—alone—alone.

CHAPTER XXV.

MUST TRUTH ALWAYS BE TOLD?

We must change our scene to the Château of Veret, the country residence of the Marquis de Montolieu.

"I hardly understand the story yet," exclaimed the Marquis, yawning.

"I will explain it to you for the twentieth time," said the Marchioness, with an air of gaiety, which an acute observer would perceived was forced. "My sister, who went young into

Germany, there married a certain Baron von Oberfeldt, the brother of the Baron Swarzenheim, who is coming to visit you. By this nobleman she had an only daughter. Both died young. Their daughter was consigned to the care of a cousin, he being the nearest relation, residing in Austria; for her paternal uncle, Baron Swarzenheim, was then abroad. When the latter returned, he demanded the guardianship of his niece. Under his care she continued for some years. At length, being appointed to a distant embassy, he is compelled to relinquish the charge. He has implored me to supply his place for a year or two, and to allow my niece to remain during that time in our château."

"How odd that your sister should have married a German."

"Not more singular than my marrying you, who are a Frenchman."

"What 's the reason," inquired the Marquis, "that this branch of your family have never let us know of their existence until the present moment?"

"My sister's marriage was against the consent of her family. Her husband, in pique, no doubt, forbid her to hold any correspondence with her relatives; and when he died, she did not long survive him."

"Humph! I predict, Marchioness, that you will find this girl an intolerable bore."

"Entertain no anxiety on that ground, my dear," said the Marchioness.

"Well! but perhaps *I* shall; which would be a still more calamitous event."

"I will engage that you shall never be troubled with her."

"I suppose, by the Baron not asking you to introduce her at Paris, that your intended pro-

tégée is a juvenile gorgon. High cheek-bones; red hair; complexion speckled, like a guinea-fowl's egg; and the ancle of a Flanders' mare. Too bad,—when you know how I detest looking at an ugly face." And the Marquis gazed in an adjacent pier glass, and arranged the curls of his peruke.

At this moment a lacquey entered, and informed the Marquis and Marchioness, that the Baron Swarzenheim and his niece had arrived at the château, and were ready to wait on them.

"Show them in immediately," cried the Marchioness.

A tall, stately gentleman, attired in a fashionable travelling dress, accompanied by a young lady of exquisite beauty, who was leaning on his arm, were ushered into the room.

The Marquis glanced first at the male visitor, and then at his companion. At the sight of so

much loveliness his countenance cleared up. He rose, and advanced to meet the Baron, with all the politeness of a pleased Frenchman.

"I have the honour, I believe," said the Marquis, "of addressing the Baron Swarzenheim."

"The same, at your service," answered the Baron. "I am afraid I am committing a breach of politeness, in thus introducing myself. No doubt the rules of society require that I should have waited until I could have found a mutual friend, but anxiety for my niece's interests induced me to take a step, which I fear you may view as an intrusion."

"Do not mention such a thing," cried the Marquis, looking at the niece. "I am delighted to have the honour of your acquaintance.— Allow me to introduce you to the Marchioness.

But," added he, " if what some folks say about the force of nature be true, I need not present your companion to her."

" I will begin our acquaintance with this embrace," said the Marchioness, clasping her fair visitor in her arms with such energy, that the Marquis's attention was attracted; and he looked at the young lady with an admiring eye, as if he should have liked to have followed his wife's example.

" What an extraordinary resemblance your niece bears to you, Marchioness," cried the Marquis, still contemplating the young German; " and to you also, Monsieur le Baron. I can distinctly trace the lineaments of both countenances, softened and harmonized into beauty, in that lovely face. Parbléu! if I did not know her to be your niece, I should have taken her to be your daughter."

The Marchioness abruptly walked to a window.

"When you consider, Monsieur le Marquis, that this young lady is the daughter of my brother, and the Marchioness's sister, the family likeness is explained, and your surprise will vanish."

"Nay," replied the Marquis, "you need not discuss the matter. I certainly did not suspect Mademoiselle to be the daughter of two persons who have never seen each other before to-day." And the Marquis laughed, and took snuff, at what he considered a good joke.

"You, yourself, Monsieur," observed the Baron, "exhibit in your face and figure all the characteristics of the race of Montolieu. I have seen the portraits of some of your renowned and warlike progenitors in our old Hungarian castles."

The Marchioness returned to the group.

"The ancestral hook in my nose, eh? Well, I have been told the same thing before. I really believe, myself, that I am like Raymond de Vaudricour, the fifth lord of Montolieu. My dear Baron, the Marchioness and myself will have the greatest possible pleasure in receiving your niece into our family during the whole period of your embassy."

"Thanks, thanks; you have taken a load off my mind," said the Baron.

"In fact," continued the Marquis, "we were both anticipating the pleasure with which we should mutually act the part of parents to our charming niece, when your arrival was announced. Were we not, Marchioness?"

"I can safely answer, for myself, in the affirmative."

"I had a prophetic *conviction*," *pursued the*

Marquis, "that the Marchioness's niece would prove a beauty. Had I not, my dear?" added he, turning to the Marchioness, who reluctantly confirmed the falsehood.

"But what distresses me," continued the Marquis, "is, that your niece should 'waste her sweetness' in the rustic solitude of this our Château de Veret. Allow us to take her to Paris?"

"Excuse me, my dear Marquis; but I could not perform my diplomatic mission in peace and tranquillity, four hundred leagues from this spot, if I thought my niece were exposed the while to the corruption and contamination of Paris," replied the Baron.

"You are bound to Constantinople, are you not?" inquired the Marchioness.

"My destination is changed. I am now despatched to St. Petersburgh."

"Capital!" cried Montolieu. "My dear Baron, your court could not have chosen a more acceptable ambassador to the chaste Catherine. You cannot fail to be on good terms with the Czarina. You are six feet high —broad shouldered—strong limbed—and have a glance of fire."

"I should think," answered the Baron, "that every corner and nook of the Czarina's heart was fully occupied."

"Ay, but variety you know—besides, my dear Baron, if you will allow me to say so, you are very like the celebrated Count Cagliostro, who, as report says, was one of the Empress's lovers under the rose. I once saw him at Paris.—But you are not offended at the comparison?" continued the Marquis, observing the Baron's face to change colour. "The resemblance I alluded to, of course, only extends to the person."

"Nay," returned the Baron; "I care not how far you conceive the similitude to extend. Cagliostro is certainly as clever, and, in all probability, quite as respectable, as any of Catherine's other lovers. That he is a charlatan, instead of a minister, is the caprice of fortune."

"Ay—ay," said the Marquis; "that is looking at the matter like a philosopher. After all, the two characters are not so different. If every charlatan is not a minister, most ministers are at least charlatans."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Baron, in great good humour.

"By the by, did you ever hear the curious story they whisper of our present ambassador to Catherine? I'll tell it you when Madame my wife has left the room."

"A thousand thanks for your forbearance," said the Marchioness.

"Well," continued the Marquis, "if Catherine makes love like a grenadier, at least she rewards like a sovereign."

"As you seem bent on continuing this edifying conversation, you must allow me to remark, that little would be gained by protecting our niece from the corruption of the metropolis, if she is compelled to hear such discussions in the country. You must excuse me if I withdraw with her for the present." With these words the Marchioness, taking her young guest's arm, made a rapid retreat, and left the gentlemen to continue a conversation, which now became too broad for transcription into our chaste pages.

The Baron did not stay long at the Château de Veret. After a sojourn of two days, during which period he had entirely acquired the good graces of the Marquis, he took a tender adieu of his niece, and set off for Vienna, with the

intention of proceeding thence to St. Petersburgh.

The Marquis's admiration for the new inmate of his château did not diminish on farther acquaintance. On the contrary, he was never tired of extolling her wit, sense, beauty, and accomplishments. He was in a good humour with everybody and everything, and seemed delighted with his wife for having such charming relatives. An unexpected incident, however, called him to Paris. He received intelligence that the Duke's mistress had eloped from him some months ago; and that her lover, far from being able to decoy her back by presents or promises, had not even succeeded in discovering her retreat. Still he was reluctant to leave Veret. The beauty and wit of his new visitor detained him by a soft and imperceptible attraction; but subsequent reflections determined

him to break the spell, by a vigorous effort, and to remove himself from the sphere of its influence. It is true, he was a good deal in love with his wife's niece; but the seduction of so intimate a connexion was a step beyond the limits he had prescribed to his license. If, indeed, she were once married to some Parisian nobleman, and established according to her rank, there would be no objection to his forming a liason with her in the character of a married woman. Such were the morals of French society before the revolution.

"I must wait till she is married," thought he, with a sentiment of moral resignation. "Till that event takes place, I must curb my desires: so I had better not expose myself to temptation by remaining here." Besides this quasi-virtuous thought, there was his bet with De Fronsac to look after: a thousand louis was a serious

sum; and then there was the pleasure and triumph of announcing his success in the affair to all his boon companions: and more than this, there was La Gabrielle waiting to receive him with the sincerest sympathy and exultation at the victorious result. All these considerations induced him, in spite of the charms which he felt in Antonia's company, to leave the Château about a week after the Baron, and to set off to Paris.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FATAL INVITATION.

"So this wonderful beauty of yours, De Fronsac, has at last fairly given you the slip"—said Count D'Ostalis to the Duke. "Upon my soul, it serves you right—eternally insulting your friends with descriptions of the celestial charms, which you would never permit their modest longing eyes to view. Her faithlessness is certainly a judgment on you, for the wanton insolence, with which you treated your less fortunate companions."

"How did you learn the news?" said the Duke.

"Oh! the whole set of us are acquainted with the flight. The only wonder is, that we did not discover the secret before. Why she eloped six months ago; De Montolieu will certainly come upon you for his thousand, louis."

"Let him come when he will," replied the Duke, "he shall be paid—that is not the worst sting of the affair; I could bear the loss of the bet, but that villain Cagliostro——"

"How is he mixed up with the matter?" asked D'Ostalis—"Oh I see—this flighty girl had already deserted you, when you applied to Cagliostro, and you sought to avail yourself of his omnipotence, and omniscience, and so forth, to decoy her back."

"Most sagacious D'Ostalis! methinks you are going to turn conjurer like your respectable

friend Cagliostro; if so—you will excuse me buttoning up my pockets in your company."

"No more my friend, than your own," retorted the Count; "I am an hundred louis the worse for seeing his face—to say nothing of the head-ache which his mystifying jargon gave me; and the awful manner in which he has twice shaken my nerves. But what was the result of your private interview with the *à priori* philosopher?"

"Results! zounds! my complaint is, that there was no result at all. After making the fairest promises and insinuating himself into the heart of my mystery—he turns round upon me, and refuses me the smallest assistance. Nay more—he adds insult to injury, and thinks fit to send me a very didactic epistle, in which he coolly advises me, as I value my life and happiness, to abandon all thoughts of Antonia—that's

the tiresome girl's name—and concludes by quoting the butt-end of some old sermon on the immorality of my past courses."

Count D'Ostalis laughed, and then mused. "I tell you what Duke," said he, "I would follow his advice, and relinquish the business."

"Your humble servant," replied the other, "and allow him to carry off the girl himself; which I verily believe he has already done, for I have ascertained that she has left her first lover. No: no: let me catch this insolent juggling charlatan within my clutches; and if I do not make him pay bitterly for the affront he has put upon me, say that De Fronsac has no stomach for revenge. In fact, I have only to hand him over to the police; and they will punish him sufficiently, on their own account, for both."

"Take my advice," said Count D'Ostalis

thoughtfully, "meddle not with that man, if indeed he is a man, and nothing more. But man or demon, be he which he may—leave him alone. I am not superstitious, but seeing is believing. Let him keep company with the devil as much as he pleases, but do not make a third to the party."

"Pshaw!" cried the Duke, with a contemptuous smile, "where are your wits? and where, oh! where is your courage? Do you expect me—me, De Fronsac—to tremble at these childish terrors? That this Cagliostro is a clever scoundrel, it is impossible to deny—that he possesses much practical scientific knowledge I do not doubt. But let us once catch the gentleman. Handcuffed with iron—within four stone walls, and deprived of his apparatus, he will possess no more power, under such circumstances, than you or I would have."

"Well: well:" replied the Count, "have your own way; I am neither Cassandra, nor Mentor, but Count D'Ostalis. Follow the desire of your own heart. Do that which seemeth best unto your Ducal wisdom. But here comes De Montolieu. Miserable De Fronsac, how will thy loyalty bear to part with a thousand beloved images of thy sovereign?"

The Count D'Ostalis and the Duke were walking on the Boulevards. The Marquis, as both expected, planted himself full in their way, and saluted them with an air of triumph.

"I will save you the trouble," said the Duke, "of making your demand. I confess myself to have lost the bet, and will pay you the amount directly, if you will accompany me to my hôtel. In consideration, therefore, of my prompt settlement, spare me your exultations on the subject."

"You quite mistake my feelings," said the Marquis, "I approached you, not bursting, as you suppose, with sentiments of ungenerous triumph, but melted with pity, and filled with thoughts of compassion and sympathy. Nay, I would have refused the money, but, that I cannot consent to deprive you of the fine moral lesson, which is contained in the loss."

"Benevolent soul!" drily exclaimed the Duke, "is this your first specimen of sympathy and consolation?"

"No:—hear me," said the Marquis, "I have just left at my Château at Veret, the most beautiful creature that Heaven ever suffered to adorn the earth;—and only seventeen—"

"Well;—" said the Duke.

"Well—if you will promise to be a good boy, and say nothing imprudent and do nothing naughty, I will try if I cannot bless your eyes with a sight of her."

"Thanks for your confidence and liberality," replied the Duke, with an equivocal smile, "Pray; who is this successor to La Gabrielle?"

"Oh! I am not so lucky as you think me; she is no successor to La Gabrielle—I wish she were. She is my wife's niece, so that if I were to attack her, the attempt would create scandal."

"Has she made her debût at Paris?" enquired the Count D'Ostalis.

"No!" replied the Marquis, "her aunt has got some confounded notions in her head, about the demoralizing effects of Parisian society, which induce her to bury this brightest of gems at Veret. So the favour I offer is as exclusive, as it is precious."

"I am infinitely beholden to you," said the Duke; "I really think I will accept your offer."

"But recollect," said the Marquis, "she is the Marchioness's niece. Remember — the

strictest decorum is absolutely necessary. If you look and love, you must despair and die. The only road is through the Church; and even were you to deposit your dukedom and ring matrimonial at her feet, I would not promise you she would think them worthy picking up."

"And supposing," replied De Fronsac with a slight smile, "that out of complaisance to your obliging hint, I made this beauty, Duchess de Fronsac. Confess the truth—would you enjoy any rest of mind or body, until you had qualified me for Heaven?"

"Hem!" said the Marquis, "you have found me before now a successful antagonist—witness the bet—"

"My bad fortune, not your own merit."

"Well," replied the Marquis, "at least you ought to acknowledge my merit, in the matter

of the proposed excursion; for your Avatar at Veret will occasion a terrible quarrel between the Marchioness and myself. You are a bitter pill to my better half; she has the worst opinion of your morals."

"You had better sweeten the mixture," cried Count D'Ostalis, "by the addition of my agreeable company."

"I have no objection, most modest Count," answered the Marquis; "my travelling carriage will hold three. But where are your thanks, Duke? will you not admit this to be a consolation?"

"I give you a thousand, and a thousand, and I wish to God I could pay my bet in the same coin."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MAN WITHOUT A HEART.

After the departure of the Marquis, his wife was for a time completely happy. She could now indulge with impunity her transports of affection towards her long lost, and late recovered daughter. Without fear of surprise or discovery, she could now clasp Antonia to her bosom, and shed tears of joy over her head. A certain learned divine compared life to a board full of round and square holes, and men to

pegs respectively fitted to these apertures; and added that all the round pegs, by some mischance or other, got into the square holes, and all the square pegs into the round holes. Madame de Montolieu was decidedly a round peg in a square hole. Nature had constituted her to attain felicity through the medium of gratified affections; while destiny, denying her domestic pleasures, had thrown her into a vortex of fashionable gaiety and dissipation, where she was stunned by the noise and bustle, without being amused by the tinsel splendour of the scene. The truth was, the Marchioness was one of those rare women, in whose disposition vanity is a very subordinate passion. Unlike most of her sex, she would have preferred love to ambition, and the charms of individual attachment, to the intoxication of general admiration. The homage and flattery, which were yielded on

every side to her wit and beauty, did not console her for the state of isolation, in which her strongest affections were placed. She had no children. Such of her relations, as were still living, resided in Italy. Her husband, after the first three months of his union, treated her with civility and neglect. They lived, in short, on those polite terms of estrangement, which were common enough before the revolution, between married people in Parisian society. Count D'Ostalis was a poor substitute for the lover, which her ardent imagination and vivid fancy, had sometimes sketched in beau ideal. Thus, the most energetic and active portions of her nature—her passions and her affections—were entirely unoccupied; and she consequently experienced that miserable ennui and weariness, common to all who are endowed with strong powers, which external circumstances prevent

them from exercising. The restoration of Antonia supplied her with an object for these feelings, whose forced inaction rendered her unhappy. Madame de Montolieu could not bear to be deprived of her company a single instant. She was never weary of conversing with her daughter. Every idea and opinion which the latter expressed, was, to her devoted mother, as a fresh page opened in a precious and mystic volume.

Madame de Montolieu possessed a very considerable knowledge of natural history, and was particularly well versed in botany. She proposed to Antonia to learn the science; and the latter, who felt that mental occupation was the best consolation she could find for the secret grief which rankled in her bosom; and who, moreover, from motives of gratitude and affection, wished to appear happier than she really

was, readily accepted the offer. For whole hours the mother and daughter would wander through the beautiful domains of the Château de Veret; sometimes indulging in that sweet interchange of feeling, so dear to intellectual minds and affectionate hearts; sometimes pursuing the science, the prosecution of which formed the ostensible object of their stroll. Secluded from the noise and din of what is called the fashionable world—removed from the vain and feverish struggle of society, Madame de Montolieu felt that the time spent in these simple and delightful occupations, were the happiest moments she had ever experienced. The being she loved best on earth was at her side. The sweet influences of nature diffused themselves over her frame, and communicated to her mind a tranquillity of soul—an unruffled calm of temper and serenity of spirit—which she had never

known before. Often the shades of evening would close over the wanderers, before they were aware how quickly the happy hours had passed. Nor did Antonia's spirit long continue mournful. If she did not attain the perfect ease and contentment of her mother; she felt as if after many storms and dangers she had at last gained a calm and secure haven. If she no longer possessed the vivid enjoyment of the past, neither was she harrassed by the precarious nature of her situation and the uncertainty of its duration.

At the close of one of these days, spent in the manner we have described, Madame de Montolieu and her daughter were sitting in the saloon of the château. Though the autumn was far advanced, the mildness of the season had tempted them to throw open the windows, that they might more fully enjoy the tranquil

beauty of the evening. The sky was pure and cloudless. The setting sun poured forth a flood of golden fire, which bathed every object with light and glory. Not the faintest breeze was stirring. Even the slender tree-tops ceased to tremble. No sounds were heard save the chirpings of a few retiring birds, who seemed summoning their partners to rest. The Marchioness sat side by side with her daughter, tenderly clasping one of Antonia's hands in both her own. They mutually gazed on the calm loveliness of the scene before them; and neither spoke. After some minutes' silence, Antonia chanced to look at the Marchioness, and saw with surprize that the eyes of the latter were filled with tears.

"Does this beautiful sunset give you pain, my mother?" asked Antonia.

"No: not pain precisely; but it conjures up

melancholy ideas to my mind. I cannot help thinking that in a few minutes all this splendour and glory will be swallowed up in the gloomy shades of evening. And then a thrill of apprehension comes over me. And I tremble lest the happiness I have lately enjoyed, like the present scene, calm and beautiful, will be also, like it, brief and evanescent too. I dread that yonder sunset is the last I shall ever behold in peace and happiness: and that a long dark night of sorrow is coming."

"You should not allow these vague fancies and undefined terrors to dwell upon your mind."

"And on what subject were your thoughts running, Antonia?"

"Nay, I was gazing on the bright orb with simple animal enjoyment. I did not think—I only felt."

Before the Marchioness could reply, the

sound of wheels in the distance was heard. She turned to her daughter with a look of apprehension.

"Hark!"

"It is only the noise of some distant post-chaise," answered Antonia. "Why should you be alarmed?"

"I know not," said the Marchioness; "but in my present mood, every thing affrights me."

Neither pursued the topic; but as if to abstract their attention from the subject, again looked towards the landscape. The sun's last rays were just disappearing over a line of distant hills. They slowly sunk. The jingle of the approaching vehicle now became distinctly audible. At length it was heard to rattle into the court-yard of the château. The Marchioness started up, and exclaimed, "I wonder who it can be—how my heart beats!"

"Dearest mother," said Antonia, flinging her arms round the Marchioness, "be calm—why should you apprehend danger?"

"Because, my darling—— but I hear footsteps in the passage; they are coming into the saloon; let us resume our seats."

As she spoke, the door opened; and the Marquis de Montolieu entered, ushering in the Duke de Fronsac!

"Ladies, your most obedient; you did not expect me to return so soon. Mademoiselle von Oberfeldt, allow me to introduce to you my particular friend the Duc de Fronsac."

Had a bomb on the point of explosion fallen into the centre of the apartment, the deadly missile would not have struck such terror to the hearts of the Marchioness and Antonia, as the sudden appearance of this dreaded nobleman. At first they gazed in speechless consternation.

But when Antonia heard him introduced to her by name, she could no longer controul her feelings. She uttered a loud shriek, and fainted. The Marchioness caught her in her arms. Overcome as the latter lady was by terror and anguish, she still retained sufficient presence of mind to make an apology for her niece's conduct. Mademoiselle von Oberfeldt had been very ill ever since the Marquis had left the château, and had fainted several times before that day.

"How unfortunate!" said the Marquis, contemplating the pale but still lovely features of Antonia, as she lay on the sofa, where the Marchioness had placed her; "these repeated faintings will ruin her beauty."

"It is very strange, Madame la Marquise," said the Duke, fixing a cold, malignant eye upon Madame de Montolieu; "but methought

when I first entered the room, the young lady possessed as perfect and lovely a bloom as ever tinged the cheek of health."

The Marchioness, the moment she had deposited Antonia on the sofa, had rung the bell for assistance. Her own soubrette now made her appearance; and by their joint assistance, Antonia, who had already recovered her senses, was enabled to walk to her sleeping apartment. The Marchioness skilfully availed herself of the pretext afforded by Antonia's illness, to gain a short period of quiet and solitary reflection, and took the opportunity to retire with her pretended niece. When the Marchioness had left the room, she endeavoured to compose her thoughts, and calmly to reflect what course it was most advisable for her, under her present distressing circumstances, to adopt. Yet, anxious as she was to find a remedy for her embarrassment, she

could not help marvelling at the singular cruelty of the mischance which had befallen her. There was but one man in all France, whose presence she dreaded at the château; and guided by some fatal perversity, the Marquis had selected that particular individual as his companion. But she had no leisure to pursue this train of thought.—Something must be done; and that speedily.—If the Duke communicated the circumstances which had first connected him with Antonia, her fate was sealed. She would stand convicted in the eyes of her husband of a flagrant, though unintelligible and inexplicable imposture. If her real relationship to Antonia were eventually discovered, the case would be still worse. She knew that the Marquis, though indifferent to her conduct as a wife, would never forgive a transgression committed before marriage. Had she not acted foolishly in

leaving the Duke alone with her husband? De Fronsac might hesitate in communicating the secret in her presence, but he could hardly be expected to feel much reluctance in imparting the information during a familiar tête-à-tête. Had she not better return, and keep perpetually in their company? There was one chance of escape; if she could prevent the Duke from betraying the secret, until she could obtain a private interview, she might persuade him to bury the transaction in eternal silence. She would throw herself on his mercy, and appeal to his generosity. S[illegible] him into her confidence. S[illegible]

near but unfortunate tie which existed between Mademoiselle von Oberfeldt and herself. She would endeavour to rouse the feelings of a father and a man, and would leave the point to be decided by his conscience, whether he would

sacrifice both mother and daughter to the indulgence of a selfish passion. She felt sure he could not be so dead to all sense of honour and generosity—so destitute of every better principle of our nature, as to refuse her request, or betray her. It is true she felt no great confidence in his character, from the traits of his conduct which had fallen under her observation, or had been related to her. Still he had a human form, and with all his vices, must have a human heart. Fraught with these resolutions, the Marchioness rejoined her husband and his visitor. She was much relieved to find from the former's manner, that nothing had as yet transpired. With a heavy and aching heart, she nevertheless joined in conversation, and even answered some questions relative to Antonia's indisposition, with tolerable composure.

The evening, though it appeared to the

anxious Marchioness a century, did not in reality last very long: for the Marquis was fatigued with his journey, and proposed retiring at an early hour. As the party were about to leave the saloon for their respective sleeping apartments, the Marchioness hastily scribbled a small note in pencil, and slipped it into the Duke's hand. The latter bowed significantly and passed on. The paper contained these words:—

"Monsieur le Duc, favour me with an interview in my dressing-room before you retire to rest."

It must be recollected that the Marquis and Marchioness de Montolieu occupied separate apartments.

The Marchioness traversed her room with disordered steps, anxiously revolving the possibility of securing the Duke's silence. A slight tap at the door announced his arrival. The Mar-

chioness advanced, and endeavoured to open it; but her agitation was so excessive, that she was unable to accomplish even this simple task. The latter obeyed, and entered with a brisk triumphant air.

"Monsieur le Duc," said the Marchioness, hardly able to articulate, "doubtless you will be surprised at the step I have taken, but the painful circumstances in which I am placed leave me no other resource."

"I agree with you, Madame la Marquise," replied De Fronsac.

"Monsieur le Duc, I am about to ask you a favour,—trifling indeed to you, but one on which my future happiness depends."

"I anticipated as much."

"Will you be merciful, and grant it to me?"

"I never sign promises in blank, and leave

them to be filled up. You must explain, madame."

"My niece, Mademoiselle Von Oberfeldt, has not always borne the name and character she now maintains."

"Assuredly she has not."

"The Marquis is not aware of this fact—but—but——"

"But his curiosity is roused," rejoined the Duke, malignantly, "and a single word would give him a clue to the whole mystery."

"God forbid! All that I ask you, Duke, is to continue to preserve the kind silence which you have hitherto maintained."

"Before I answer your request, madam, you must permit me to inquire the meaning of your inexplicable conduct. What earthly object can you propose to gain by causing a young adventuress to enact the part of your niece?"

"Painful circumstances," said the Marchioness, gasping out the words, "which I cannot explain, have impelled me to the strange course I have taken. But I ask you, in your turn, Monsieur le Duc, what object you can propose to gain by revealing a secret on which the happiness of two human beings depends?"

"I will tell you frankly, Madam," replied the Duke. "Your present conduct is an obstacle to the completion of my desires. You stand between me and my pleasures. For years I have supported, educated, and protected the peevish girl whom you now patronize. In spite of my numerous favours she left me. But she has now lost the paramour she fled with; and want and penury would soon compel her to sue for readmittance to my roof, did not your capricious and unaccountable favour support her in her pride and ingratitude."

"Ah! spare that unhappy child more misery," said the Marchioness. "She has suffered so much already. Born with a disposition that nature formed for love and pleasure, she has endured every variety of woe. Now that she has at last gained a quiet haven, do not drive her thence. There are a thousand women in France who would with eagerness dispute the honour of your attentions; in mercy do not force them on this poor girl. To gratify an hour's whim, do not make her miserable for life. Speak: Duke, you are wild and gay; but I know you are generous at heart—you will grant my request—you will allow her to remain unmolested in her retreat."

"Nothing for nothing," replied the Duke. "In this egotistical world everything has its price; and a cypher seldom fetches more than its own value. The only alliances that are

firm and lasting are those which benefit both parties. What profit do I draw from this treaty of silence? What recompense do you offer me for keeping your secrets?"

"Point me out any mode of evincing my gratitude," replied the Marchioness, eagerly. "Ah! how gladly would I obey the suggestion."

"At present," said the Duke, with a look which made the Marchioness shudder, "I will dispense with any personal proof of gratitude on your own part. It is by your influence over your protégée's mind that you can chiefly hope to render me service. You need not communicate to her the danger of her position. It is evident, by her agitation, that she is fully aware of it. But you must inculcate compliance to my desires as the only path of safety. You must stifle the last lingering throbs of hesitation or reluctance; you must teach her to affect, if she

cannot feel, regret for her past refusals, and make her sensible that nothing but an excess of complaisance will induce me to pardon her former obduracy. On these very mild conditions I engage on my part not to betray the imposition she is carrying on, nor in any way to disturb her present position."

The Marchioness during this speech seemed stupified with horror. On the cessation of his voice she appeared to perceive the necessity of rousing her energy, and making some answer to the odious propositions she had just heard.

"You do not know," said she, in an almost hysterical tone, "you do not understand our real position—our relation to each other - or else you could not propose such horrors. I will confide in you—I will explain everything. That young person, Antonia I mean, you will hear with surprise, is my daughter. Yes; before

my marriage with the Marquis. Judge now if you will persist in these dreadful conditions. My guilt—my neglect—my criminal neglect—have already brought down a load of evil upon my unhappy child. Already she has been placed, by the desertion of her natural relations, in frightful positions, where resistance to surrounding circumstances was impossible. Would you now put the crowning stroke to her misery and my infamy, and make me become the procuress and seducer of my own daughter? No; no; you jest—you do but jest. It is as little in man to ask, as it is in woman to grant such a request. Were you ever a father, Duke? But no, you could never understand the strength and depth of my affection. True, she is illegitimate, but she is still my child—the only one I ever had. I lost her in early youth. Throughout my whole life I have thought of her—

dreamed of her, till I was almost mad; I sought her as a miser would search for the one lost jewel which constituted his whole fortune. I found her and began to dream of happiness. I risked reputation and almost life to recover her —to place her in her present situation; and will you crush our dawning hopes for ever? Will you bid me—a mother—to become my own daughter's executioner? No; no. You did not know what you asked. In the name of common humanity," continued the frantic Marchioness, throwing herself at the Duke's feet, "I implore your mercy. You may one day need it yourself. I entreat your mercy. Allow us to exist in peace. When you have broken the heart of one who never injured you, and rendered infamous the dearest object of her love, will you be happier yourself? Listen to the prayers of a mother—you had a mother once

yourself. Yield to your better feelings. Promise that you will not reveal the secret to my husband. Promise that you will not utter that one word !"

Here the Marchioness paused from utter exhaustion. The Duke, who had listened with the utmost curiosity and interest to the Marchioness's narrative, or rather to her broken exclamations, contemplated her kneeling figure with great attention, and after a few moments' silence, said :—

"I believe you, madam,—you resemble Antonia in face, figure, and tournure. Yes: the tale is true—your very attitudes are the same—the same marvellous grace of form—the same elegance and freedom of motion. These prove your maternity, better than a hundred lying witnesses."

"You believe my story ?" resumed the Mar-

chioness eagerly, "you cannot then hesitate to grant my request, to promise secresy without annexing those horrible conditions?"

"You must have formed a strange idea of my character, madame," said the Duke, with much composure, "to think that a long tragedy speech, even though well recited, and delivered with good emphasis, would induce me to swerve from my determination. The case stands simply thus. I find my runaway mistress maintaining a fictitious character in my friend's house. Well—I am not ill-natured. I offer not to disturb her game, if she will only consent to play mine for a short time. I am willing enough to sacrifice my friend to her—what can I do more? You cannot expect me to sacrifice myself—my own pleasures. Every body has his turn. A few months ago, circumstances gave her the power of eluding my grasp; she

used it without scruple. Now, circumstances enable me to extort from her whatever I choose to ask. Do you think I shall be such an idiot, as to forbear availing myself of the opportunity. I offer her the alternative of an assignation, or a revelation. Let her choose between the two ; I have taken my resolution: let her do the same. Madame la Marquise I have the honour to wish you good night."

Before the Marchioness could make any answer, or renew her supplications, he had left the apartment.

END OF VOL. II.

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